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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Department of Music

THE NEGRO IN MUSIC IN SAINT LOUIS

THE NEGRO IN MUSIC IN SAINT LOUIS, *Cotter, A.M.* 1959  
~~Cotter: Master of Arts in Music Education~~

~~John~~ June, 1959 ~~Cotter~~

A thesis presented to the  
Graduate Board of Washington  
University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Arts  
in Music Education

June, 1959

Saint Louis, Missouri



Thesis Case.

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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Department of Music

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THE NEGRO IN MUSIC IN SAINT LOUIS

by

John Cleophus Cotter

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Graduate Board of Washington  
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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is mainly a chronological account of the growth and development of the Negro musical movement in Saint Louis, Missouri. Included is an introductory background concerning the Negro in Music in America, and an account of the individuals who helped foster the development in Saint Louis. There is also a special chapter on Jazz and the Negro as a Jazz Musician in Saint Louis.

Many books and periodicals have been written on the development of music and of the Negro music of America, but I do not know of a comprehensive text written on the growth of a Negro musical movement in a selected community. Saint Louis was chosen as the particular community since I am best acquainted with this city, and also because Saint Louis is one of the cities in the United States richest in Negro musical lore.

The musicians in this dissertation are divided into four categories: performers, composers, conductors, and teachers. Also included are music lovers and patrons who are not musicians, but have contributed to the development of this movement.

The music to be discussed is divided into three categories:

## I. Religious Music

## II.



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The music to be discussed is divided into these categories:

### 1. Religious Music



School Sy 2. Secular music

through her A. 'Classical' or concert music

papers and other To include music in the idiom as written

information per by so-called serious composers e.g. Bach,

not Berlin

Louis Publ B. Folk music - non religious

Negro music C. Popular Music

the Negro music To include the blues, ragtime, dixieland,

to converse with jazz, songs from musical comedies, etc.

musical In writing this dissertation, even at the outset it rapidly became apparent that there was little primary source material, and practically no organized information bearing on the subject, but because of the many interested citizens of Saint Louis, this dissertation was made possible.

Through interviews, correspondence, phone calls and other sources of contact, also information in the nature of documents, programs, souvenir books, newspapers, magazines, clippings, bulletins, periodicals, etc., much valuable material was obtained.

and the Ernst Krohn of the Music Department of Saint Louis University, gave me my first source of information. He granted me access to his notes, his library, and his own periodicals and books concerning music in Saint Louis and the state of Missouri. For this I shall be ever grateful.

Local Invaluable assistance was given me by one of my former teachers, Julia Davis, of the Saint Louis Public

local and national leaders iii



School System. She readily gave me the privilege of looking through her private files where documents, bulletins, books, papers and other periodicals were observed that contained information pertaining to the subject matter.

I. Pearl Sexton, long associated with the Saint Louis Public Schools, and closely acquainted with pioneers in Negro music of Saint Louis, furnished pertinent data on the Negro musicians prior to 1900. It was very interesting to converse with him concerning the pioneers of this musical movement. Many epoch-making events were discussed and programs and periodicals reviewed.

I have had personal contact with music leaders in Saint Louis through my early years of education in the Saint Louis Public school system and at Stowe Junior College before receiving my degree of Bachelor of Science in Public School Music at Wilberforce University. Under the direction of Wirt D. Walton, I sang with the Sumner High School A Cappella Choir and Boys Glee Club, a musical experience I shall never forget. From Mr. Walton and the music literature used by these musical organizations under his direction, I became familiar with many of the works of local and national composers.

Performing in the popular music field, and having served for eight years as secretary of Musicians Union Local #197, a Saint Louis affiliate with the American Federation of Musicians, I became familiar with many of the local and national leaders in the field of jazz. Having



been associated with this musical movement, it was an interesting experience to do research and learn more concerning the pioneers of this movement in Saint Louis and present these facts in a comprehensive form. I have long felt these facts should be compiled and documented.

Historical facts concerning the affiliation of the Negro musicians in Saint Louis with the American Federation of Musicians were given by Edward McKinney and Elijah W. Shaw, both pioneers in that movement.

The Bureau of Vital Statistics of Saint Louis, and Jefferson City, Missouri and Oberlin, Ohio provided valuable biographical information.

Many of the educators, performers and music teachers in this area have been contacted in gathering information for this endeavor, and all were helpful in giving information and leads for further contact.

Due to the difficulties in assembling information for this thesis, it is highly possible that some individuals and events that helped foster this movement are omitted, not purposely, but for the lack of contact leading to such information.

The author takes full responsibility for the validity of the material presented in this thesis.



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## CHAPTER I

### THE NEGRO IN MUSIC IN AMERICA

In the field of music, the success of the Negro in America has been possibly greater than in any other endeavor. Of course there are some certain sociological reasons why a dominant group feels that it can afford to allow a minority group to enjoy some success in an enterprise which has historically often been allotted to a servant class. Musicians can conveniently be classified as 'servants of the public', even though their artistry and talent differentiates them from the domestic type of employee.

Given an opportunity in the various phases of music, the American Negro has been among the leaders throughout the years in the field of music in America and in the world.

His success in music is evidenced by the number of individuals who have made outstanding contributions as performers, composers, conductors and teachers. Among these are Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, Justin Holland, Madame Selika, Azalia Hackley, and more recently Harry T. Burleigh, Marian Anderson, Clarence Cameron White, Roland Hayes, Nathaniel Dett, Paul Robeson, Dean Dixon, Dorothy Maynor, William Grant Still, Ulysses Kay, Robert McFerrin, Duke Ellington, Art Tatum, Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker and John Birks 'Dizzy' Gillespie, all to be discussed in this text.



## The Negro in the New World

### The Coming of the Negro to America

The first group of Negroes known to settle in America were brought here in 1619. These were twenty African natives who were aboard a Dutch vessel which landed in Jamestown, Virginia.

Others were brought to America, principally from Africa, but also from the West Indies, Barbados, indirectly by way of other islands that belonged to European countries, and also directly from many European countries. These Negroes were involuntary importations brought to America to solve the labor and economic problems that existed among the colonists. In early America agriculture was the chief means of livelihood. Hard work was a prime necessity and every available hand was important. The Indians had been used as servants, but did not prove to be very useful because of their hostile attitude toward servitude. Imported whites were used as servants, but were freed by contract, thus posing a problem for the colonists. Neither the Indians nor the imported whites performed the labor necessary to clear the forests and bring the rich land under cultivation. The Negroes who were imported solved this problem.

The center of the colonial slave trade was the African west coast extending about two hundred miles east of the Niger River.



"From this comparatively small region came as many slaves as from the rest of Africa together."<sup>1</sup>

The other slaves who came to America were of a different stock from the African Negroes; some were moors, and a few came from Madagascar.

The Negroes who came from Africa were from various tribes and brought with them, what seemed to the whites at that time, their own wild, barbaric drum-beats, and weird melodies. They spoke many different languages. These natives were captives of aggressive nations that had invaded Africa, and all were not of the 'savage type', as they are often depicted. Some were soldiers, statesmen, rulers, inventors, and diplomats, and showed signs of high civilization.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Music of the Negro in America

In discussing the language of the songs sung by the Africans, Miles Fischer states:

"The great majority of the original texts of slave songs are not available for only a few of these African songs have been preserved. When Negro singing was first understood in Virginia, it was a mixture of African and English. Around Louisiana, slaves sang in a dialect which was a jargon of African and French, such as was used in South Carolina and Haiti. Negro singing retained this linguistic synthesis throughout slavery."<sup>3</sup>



As the American whites translated these songs, the English words showed both accidental and intentional errors of transmission..

No uniformity or consistent spelling would be possible when the songs were sung by Negroes on different levels of culture, for in early America there were free born, freed, and slave-born Negroes from various sections of the world. Each had his own song. In order to fit the tunes of the songs to words, many adjustments were necessary to conform to definite meter patterns. Slave songs were studied by missionary teachers, and many collections were published.

It is not surprising that these Africans first brought as captives to American found it difficult to express themselves in the words of a newly heard language and that the usage of the English words in a number of the first songs in English would be obscure.

#### Description and Character of the Songs

In describing the music of the Africans, Maud Cuney Hare states:

"The songs of the Africans are chiefly a species of recitative or chant with a short chorus. The soloist gives the melody while the chorus sings a refrain, which at times are but ejaculations. The chief singer remains standing while the members of the chorus are seated around him; and as the melody is given out, they turn to one



another, each improvising in turn. Their power of invention and improvisation may last for hours. Expert in adapting song to current events, they indulge in mockery, ridicule, and sarcasm, or in flattery or praise of men and happenings."<sup>4</sup>

### Customs and Traits Brought to America

The traditional love for music was one of the greatest attributes the Africans brought to America. In their native land music was an important part of their daily life. Singing people were found in every town. They used their voices and their bodies as well as instruments in making their music.

"African music was employed during love-making, at marriages, at the birth of a child, at the child's initiation into a tribal cult, in farming, in fishing, for recreation such as telling tales, proverbs and riddles, at wakes and at funerals."<sup>5</sup>

These musical traits and customs were brought to America and began the music of the Negro in America.

"As they were stripped of every form of birthright when brought to America, necessity forced the Negro to fashion crude instruments from material at hand, for example: trees, reeds, and bones. Adding to clapping and patting, one form of rhythm grew from the performers beating an improvised drum in such a manner as to bring the beat and words simultaneously together. The rhythmic patterns, never simple, were made to suit the verbal expression."<sup>6</sup>

From that time to the present, the music of the Negro in America has been an integral part of American



culture. This music had undergone many changes and stages of development. From the seemingly barbaric songs of the foreign natives brought to this country, through the era of songs of the slaves, the more joyful songs after the emancipation, the advancement of educational facilities, the rise of the popular songs, the ragtime, blues and jazz eras, plus the musical trends as they have changed in America, the Negro has established himself alongside of his white brother as an outstanding composer, performer, conductor and teacher. Negro musicians have achieved national and international fame in all phases of music.

The signing of Marian Anderson, long considered as one of the great American singers of the century, to appear with the Metropolitan Opera Company in a featured role, may have served as an enlightening symbol of the achievements of the Negro in Music in America.<sup>7</sup> Following her successful performance, Robert McFerrin and Mattiwilda Dobbs were signed by the Metropolitan Opera Company.

#### Negro Music Something New to American Culture

It has often been written that what the Negro has produced in music is merely an imitation or modification of what he has learned from other Americans since the African captives were brought into this country and enslaved. This has been denied by many authorities on the



subject. As stated in the Negro History Bulletin:

"The Negro spirituals, jubilee, ragtime jazz, and blues, brought something new to the American models."<sup>8</sup>

Professor Edgar Rogie Clark, former head of the Department of Music of Jackson (Mississippi) College, and one of the leading Negro educators of the south, in an article entitled 'Folklore Sleuth' commented on this subject matter:

"It is high time to discard the misleading and ridiculous theory that Negro music in its entirety is an imitation or adaption of the music of a white majority. This could have happened only if the culture of our group was exhausted and this just didn't happen. As soon as the Negro realized that his stay in America was to be permanent, he instinctively preserved his African element in cultural creations. Without radical reform, he immediately produced music on the European style, but also in accord with African traditions of music. Africanism was too strong, too deep-rooted, too full of sentiment and vitality to succumb to the new form entirely."<sup>9</sup>

In speaking of Negro American music as new, the author does not mean to intimate that the Negro in the development of his music was not influenced by others. This is always true of any culture where contact with different people is possible. The African, coming in contact with what the Europeans brought to America, was influenced by that culture different from the experience of the Europeans settlers themselves. While the early European settlers, or the pioneer American whites tended to become



merely Europeans changed by geographical location, the highly emotional African of a different temperament reacted to this modern contact in a different way. He was confused since he was in bondage. Conditions were strange to him and this bewilderment was expressed in his music. The religious and esthetic result among the Negroes then was something new, a product neither European nor African, but American.<sup>10</sup>

A few fairly well-schooled white musicians who perpetrated their European ideas of music and harmony founded the first American schools of music. These music schools were for the whites.

The music of the Africans brought to America was a cultural heritage and not a formal art. No formal schools were established. Since Negro music remained a folk art, it was subject to changes brought about by environmental conditions far more than that by the formalized European traditions. The resultant music was an entirely new synthesis of various African and West Indian traditions fused with American-European traditions of servitude which was the lot of most of the early Negroes in America.

The Negroes were discouraged by the whites from continuing in America their dances and other rites from the wilds of Africa. They were told that these were sinful manifestations which could drag their souls down to Hell.<sup>11</sup>



There was left to them only their indigenous music, and even this was modified by Biblical teaching and by such European music as the early settlers brought over from their home countries.

These Negroes in America, longing for their native land, portrayed in songs the ills of slavery.

"Music played so important a part in African life that it is natural that the Negro continued his singing after reaching America. The sorrow of his enslavement probably stirred him to sing more than he did before." 12

"If it had not been for the Negro's deep religious faith and his ability to release his emotions through song, he perhaps would not have been able to survive the hardships of slavery." 13

These early songs which traced the history of the Negro from Africa to America and depicted his past and present status in the new world are considered by some authorities to be one of the forms of American music which meets the scientific definition of folk songs. Thus, this music has taken its place in history as a remarkable contribution to music of modern times.

#### Negro Songs

On the subject of the music of the Negro in America, it is stated in the Harvard Dictionary of Music:

"The songs of the American Negro form one of the choicest bodies of folk music originating on the North American Continent.



The term 'Negro music' is generally applied to music composed by the Negro himself, either as a folk group creation or by individual authors, and it is not to be confused with the Negro-dialect songs which have been composed largely by white men: the plantation songs of Stephen Foster, the 'coon songs' of the late 19th century, and the recent imitations of 'blues' songs which are produced by a highly commercialized 'Tin Pan Alley'.<sup>14</sup>

### Folk Songs

#### The Spirituals

#### The Birth of the Spirituals

During the period of Negro enslavement, a highly characteristic music was developed. As expressed by J. Rosamond Johnson:

"Slavery their sorrow, religion their comfort and refuge, these Negroes with their belief in a new and everloving God, poured forth their emotions in song."<sup>15</sup>

These songs of pent-up emotion are described very vividly in the Negro History Bulletin:

"When the Negro felt blood lashed from his back, he sang, 'Nobody Knows but Jesus'. When in the midst of his trials he could find no one to comfort him, he sang, 'Steal Away to Jesus'. When he saw that there was no escape from his oppressor, he had some consolation in the thought of final deliverance and sang, 'I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always'. When in old age, the burdens accumulated to the point of being unbearable, he sang 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot, Coming For to Carry Me Home'. Thus was born the Negro spiritual, a new experience to American Music."<sup>16</sup>



Of all the songs of the Negro in America, the one most closely associated with him is the spiritual. These are considered by many as his greatest contribution to the music of America.

"Besides being relaxing and a solace to the Negroes, such songs were stimulus to courage and a tie to Heaven." 17

These songs, born while the Negro was enslaved, have since become a composite part of our American musical heritage. They have been revised in various forms, and have supplied thematic material for compositions of composers such as Anton Dvorak, Roy Harris, Harry T. Burleigh and John Alden Carpenter, although it is doubtful that they have been improved through this usage. These spirituals have been given formal titles and can be found listed on programs of artists to be sung either in groups or by soloists in a cappella fashion or with orchestra, piano or organ accompaniment. The incorrect grammar and dialect of the early spirituals have been retained in most instances. This characteristic seems to add to the simplicity and sincerity of the songs.

#### Misinterpretation of the Spirituals

In most cases, Negroes speaking the same language were deliberately segregated so as to make communication difficult and this made it necessary for them to learn a kind of pigeon English as best they could in order to



converse. It is unfortunate that the spiritual texts, conceived in this rudimentary jargon, are often used as part of the well-known stereotype of the Negro as an illiterate comic character. Considered in their proper context, the texts, as well as the music of the spirituals, assume their place as notable achievements of an alien group in a strange land under the most difficult circumstances. It is an amazing musical phenomenon that this music has lived on to become an important part of America's cultural heritage.

#### Simplicity and Sincerity of the Spirituals

Because of the simplicity of the Negro spirituals, their value to the musical culture of America as folk songs has been a matter of controversy for many years, but the fact that they have lasted through the years, have been performed at concert halls by noted performers and have been heard throughout the world, justifies their place with other forms of American music.

It is generally agreed by scholars and laymen that folk music is from the soil, and from basic experiences of any given group, rather than an imitation of the experiences of other groups. The first spirituals were songs spontaneously created by the early Negroes in America, from experiences during servitude. This fact should merit their recognition as American Folk Songs.



Odum and Johnson speak of the spirituals:

"Such songs are all valuable as an expression of the character and life of the race which is playing such a conspicuous part in our history."<sup>18</sup>

John Tasker Howard states:

"The songs are vital because they are sincere - they speak the Negro's true nature, and when songs truly reflect the character of the people who sing them, they are folksongs beyond question of their origin."<sup>19</sup>

Howard Edward Krehbiel writes:

"The songs of the slaves are original and native products. They contain idioms which are transplanted hither from Africa, but as songs they are the product of American institutions; of the social, political and geographical environment within which their creators were placed in America; of the joys, sorrows and experiences which fell their lot in America."<sup>20</sup>

#### Derivation of Name

These songs were called spirituals because of their religious character. Some say they were revealed by the Holy Spirit to an oppressed people.

Krehbiel further states:

"The plantation songs, known as spirituals, are the spontaneous outbursts of intense religious fervor. They breathe a childlike faith in a personal Father and glow with hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom."<sup>21</sup>

In the present collection we find songs of Moses, Sam, Jonah, David, the two Marys, Martha, Luke, John, Ananias and Sapphira, Cain,



Just as everyday experiences were the subjects of songs of the Negroes in Africa, so were they the subjects of many of the spirituals. At times, the slaves would begin singing of existing conditions; often one slave would start and the song would be joined by others with verses added as the song went on.

### Idiom of the Spirituals

Although some writers use the minor mode as a characteristic of the spirituals, it has been closer observed that the spirituals written in this mode are in the minority. The pentatonic scale is more prevalent in the spirituals. The use of the flatted seventh and the flatted third is common in the more diatonic songs. At times a very complex rhythm is noted in the structure of many of the spirituals, a characteristic of the songs of the Shanti tribe of Africa.

### Biblical Interpretation of the Spirituals

The Christian doctrine and the Old Testament played an important part in the life of the slaves. Most of the spirituals connected everyday activities to some Bible story or Biblical characters.

"The number of Biblical characters mentioned is more astonishing even than their actions. In the present collections we find Jacob, Moses, Noah, Jonah, David, the two Marys, Martha, Luke, John, Ananias and Sapphira, Cain,



Abel, Daniel, Nicodemus, Paul, Silas, the 'Hebrew Children' Jesus, Joseph, Josiah, Ezekiel, and the Paraoah's daughter. Some of them are merely mentioned in passing or as witnesses 'to my Lawd'. Others are dealt with very erratically by the Negro memory and imagination." 22

White further states:

"It is not only in the Biblical incidents and characters of the spirituals that the Negro displays his fondness for reading and explaining the Bible. Many spiritual stanzas are based upon favorite texts. Anyone who will compare a large body of Negro spirituals with the books of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Revelation will be astonished." 23

These interpretations of Biblical texts were the early Negroes own conception of the Bible.

White gives specific examples:

Biblical Passages:

Ezekiel ii, 1-11

Thus saith the Lord God into these bones:  
Behold, I shall cause breath to enter into  
you and ye shall live (5)

Isaiah, vi, 11

Then said I, Lord, how long. xxvii, 13 - and  
it shall come to pass in that day that the  
great trumpet shall be blown

Revelation vii, 13

What are these that are arrayed in white robes,  
whence came they?

Spiritual Passages:

Dry bones gwine to rise again; Dese bones  
gwine rise again.



Lord how long shall I blow? What shall  
I do when the first trumpet sounds?

Who's that comin' all dressed in white?  
Must be the children of the Israelites.

### Justification of Biblical Interpretation of the Spirituals

The interpretation of the Bible as demonstrated by the Negro slaves in the spirituals has also been made a part of the stereotype of the Negro as an illiterate buffoon. Again it is the failure to consider this naive use of the Bible in its proper context which has given rise to the misleading concept of illiteracy and naiveté as being synonymous with stupidity and lack of intellectual potential. Howard E. Krehbiel quotes an article written by Marion Alexander Haskell in the August, 1899 issue of 'The Century Magazine':

"The musical talent of the uneducated Negro finds almost its only expression in religious song, and for this there is a simple explanation. A race imbued with religious sentiment, one rarely finds among them an adult who has not gone through that emotional experience known as conversion, after which it is considered vanity and sinfulness to indulge in song other than that of a sacred character." 24

The dominant whites, with their intention to keep the enslaved Negroes inferior, knew that education was dangerous to servitude, so the Bible was the only book to which most of the slaves had access. Christianity was encouraged, but on a segregated basis. They justified the



torment and suffering of the hard-working slaves by using the Bible as a tool, with the promise of the life hereafter and their supreme reward in Heaven as a greater incentive than the life here on earth. Reading the Bible was a great consolation to the slave, and was the inspiration for his songs. The slave felt that if God delivered Daniel from the Lions Den, he would deliver him someday and make him free.

Many educated persons today have varied interpretations of the Bible. There are over four hundred religious sects today that use the Bible as a basis for their belief. Most of the religions conflict in their interpretation of the Bible; thus the author feels that the interpretation of the oppressed and practically illiterate slave should not be a subject for amusement.

#### Value of the Spirituals to American Musical Heritage

As expressed by R. Nathaniel Dett:

"The beauty and value of the Negro Spirituals were not fully recognized until the Fisk Jubilee Singers returned to America around 1880 after a tour of Europe where they featured these songs. When they returned with unheard of honours the endorsement of the music critics of the old world, and above all, with much money, America suddenly awakened to the fact that here within her own borders was an indigenous, unique and unexploited art-treasure. Dett further states: Consequently, numerous collections of 'Jubilee Songs' shortly appeared. These marked the first development of the music,



for the editors furnished harmonizations in accordance with academic rules; which constituted, at least from a scientific standpoint, an advance over the improvised chords of the folk singers. These collections were the forerunners of various arrangements and settings of Negro spirituals by both white and Negro musicians, which flood the market today, and which settle an important and much mooted question. Negro melodies are neither too wild, strange, exotic or unusual to be represented by the devices of conventional music notation." 25

To John W. Work, who came to Fisk University to teach around 1896, after having graduated from the institution earlier, can be given credit for restoring the spirituals to the culture of America after the tours of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers. Work carried on the work of the early music leaders at Fisk, as a promoter of Negro music through the Fisk Jubilee Singers. It has been said that Work gave the Negro Folk Song a new hearing. He published a book, "Folk Songs of the American Negro," containing not only a collection of these canticles, but a classification and comment as to their origin and purpose. This volume awakened new interest in Negro music. Many other worthwhile commentaries on the Negro Folk Music like those of White, Fischer, Johnson, Odum, Jessye and Dett have followed the standard set by John W. Work. 26

In his publication, Work states that the spirituals are folk songs characterized by the elements of hope, religion, sorrow, rhythm, syncopation, spontaneity, and



the absence of feeling of hatred or revenge. These songs are classified by Work thus:

Joy Songs: e.g. "Shout All Over God's Heaven"  
and "Good News"  
Sorrow Songs: e.g. "I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray"  
Songs of Faith: e.g. "You May Bury Me in the East"  
and "I Have Another Building"  
Songs of Love: e.g. "Old Time Religion" and "Love  
Came Tricklin Down"  
Songs of Hope: e.g. "Good Lord When I Die", "I Hope  
I'll Join That Band"  
Songs of  
Determination: e.g. "Keep a Inching Along"  
Songs of  
Adoration: e.g. "Love King Jesus"  
Songs of Patience  
e.g. "By and BY"  
Songs of Courage: e.g. "Stay in the Field"

From Work's comments on the origin of many of the spirituals that have lasted through the years, the following remarks concerning 'Steal Away to Jesus' were noted:

"On a plantation down on the Red River, in the early part of the nineteenth century, a master of a large number of slaves was accustomed to allowing them to go across the river, at a stated time, that they might worship with the Indians who had a mission there. They always enjoyed themselves, and talked much of the good times on the other side of the river. One day the master learned that the missionary to the Indians was a northern man; and believing that he might put ideas of freedom in the heads of his slaves, stopped them from worshipping any more across the river. The slaves could not forget the good times across the river; and what they could not do in the open they determined to do in secret. They decided to 'steal away to Jesus' as one slave expressed it. 'Steal



Away to Jesus' whispered at first, later  
 chanted softly, was notice that there were  
 to be services that night across the river.  
 All day in the cotton and corn fields that  
 little tune was heard until all the slaves  
 knew of the meeting that night. At night  
 when the master, overseer and hounds were  
 asleep, the slaves would steal from their  
 cabins and quietly creep through the fields  
 softly humming their greetings to one another.  
 On their secretly made rafts they paddled  
 themselves across the river. When they  
 reached the banks they sang: 'My Lord,  
 He calls me, He calls me by the thunder'  
 etc. .. Green tree a-bending, poor  
 sinner a-trembling' etc. .. Remembering that  
 they would be punished if they remained  
 too long, they sang: 'I ain't got long  
 to stay here'.

A missionary related the story of this song  
 to the original Fisk singers and explained  
 that the song was not produced in one day.  
 Each experience added another expression."<sup>28</sup>

Although this type of story is perhaps apocryphal, ★  
 it certainly indicates the kind of situation which  
 could give rise to the spiritual.

The Negro spirituals have been the basis of many  
 of the songs of the American Negro. Many of these  
 songs will be discussed further in this dissertation.

### Other Negro Folk Songs

#### The Social Songs

As has been mentioned, the spirituals with  
 their sincerity and earnestness were considered a great  
 addition to the musical heritage of America, but the  
 early Negro in America had other songs which were of a



secular nature and were used by the Negroes simply for entertainment and amusement.

These songs were among the first to be encouraged by the planters in order to keep up the spirits of the slaves, and they suggested that the Negro wanted to enjoy himself here on earth instead of always seeking comfort in the life hereafter. The songs also served as a tool to enable the slave to begin thinking of himself as a part of American instead of a chattel. It would be too much to expect of the Negro, or any other race, to live and sing constantly on the high plane of the spirituals. Thus were born the social songs.

The social songs, as were the spirituals were the result of spontaneous origin and included songs devoted to animals,<sup>29</sup> narratives and ballads, parodies of religious songs,<sup>30</sup> and songs of recent events. The slaves would find some comic aspect to many conditions normally considered serious or even tragic, and make up songs. They would also make up songs about each other with many improvisations.

As the spirituals were revised in many forms, so were these social songs. When the white black-faced minstrels began appearing in America, the social songs of the Negro served as a source for many of the minstrel



songs. In this form of entertainment, the Negro was mimicked. As the Negro became a more integrated part of America, these songs were resented, although some were written by the Negroes themselves, but were not meant to be used as a device of degradation.

### Work Songs

Another of the early Negro songs in America was the work song.. This type of song was also sung in Africa, and so became common as the slaves labored. As expressed by J. Rosamond Johnson:

"Singing all the time, singing while he worked in the fields, finding a new song for each and every job as he went along, down and up the gangplank to a freight car or to some steamboat outward bound, he soon found the making of a melodic expression, which stimulated his movement as he toiled on and on with his carefree rhythmic stride. These songs were known as work songs." 31

Among these songs were many versions of 'John Henry', Steamboat Bill, Railroad Dan, the Hammer Song and Water Boy.

These early folk songs were the beginning of the music of the Negro in America, and were songs of a race, new to America, more so than of individuals.

### American Influence in the Early Folk Songs

During the period of enslavement, as the Negro



became more familiar with the language of America and the customs of the American way of living, his songs gradually became less African in character and took on the traits of his new home. Some of these early songs are considered to be a contribution to the music of America while others are thought of as being simply humorous and merely the songs of an illiterate alien in a strange land. It may be that some reevaluation is needed. After slavery, many of the earlier folk songs were retained.

For commercial purposes, much of the simplicity, humbleness, and sincerity have been taken out of many of these songs. The words and themes from many of the spirituals have been used in various other phases of music. Such songs as 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot', 'When the Saints Go Marching IN', 'Deep River' and recently 'HE's Got the Whole World in His Hands', have been used by jazz bands and singers, either in their original form or some adaptations. During the trend of 'Rhythm and Blues', many spirituals have supplied the themes for some of the most popular tunes. As a result, some singers have turned from the religious vein to secular songs for a livelihood. Much to the disgust of many Negro religious leaders, it is rather difficult at times to distinguish between a Negro religious song and a blues or jazz tune, because of the



music and type of performance.

The current 'Rock and Roll' craze has encouraged many to equate the Negro religious songs with the commercial effort of popular writers. The following news article bears out this fact:

"The delicate and highly controversial question of whether or not there is too much 'rock 'n roll' in religion is given a penetrating analysis in the current issue of Color, the national bi-monthly pictorial magazine.

In a daring feature entitled 'Is There Too Much Rock 'n Roll in Religion?' Color declares that the only difference between rock 'n roll music as presented in theatres and dance halls, and gospel music as sung by some vocal groups and church choirs, is that 'the rock and roller' is an out and out jazz musician who doesn't try to camouflage his trade, while some gospel groups and their followers are merely rock and rollers who are intentionally or unknowingly shielded behind the mask of Christianity.

A prominent Chicago minister, explaining why he bans gospel singing groups from his church, told Color that: 'Some of my colleagues defend this new interest in bringing gospel singing programs into their churches to raise money and boost attendance. They say that the Bible tells us to make a joyful noise unto the Lord, which is true. But I don't think the Bible tells us to cheapen our religion by over-commercialization of spiritual songs, and by adopting the ways and means of the theatrical world in order to put over a song, a program or an individual pastor.' 33

In the opinion of this writer, most of the music termed 'rock and roll' is the most banal type of American



music devoid of interest or value. It seems to be a mixture of 'Hillbilly' music, long associated with the backwoods white American, the religious songs of the early Negroes, and the 'low brow' blues of the southlands which preceded the blues of such composers as the late W. C. Handy.

If there can be any dominant factor of 'rock and Roll' music, it must be the 'beat' which has such an appeal with the teenagers, who are the most ardent supporters of rock and roll music. The heavy accentuation of the 2nd and 4th beat, called the 'back beat', seems to give the dancers the pulsation needed.

To term rock and roll music as basically Negro music is a fallacy, because it has none of the sincerity or seriousness of much of the music considered Negro music. Rock and Roll cannot be termed as an independant form of popular music because it has characteristics of many other phases of jazz.

#### Negro Music After Slavery

Certain authorities on the history of Negro music believe that when the enslaved Negroes became free and began to study music, many took great pride in getting away from the plantation music which had been associated with them. Even some who could not attend



school and acquire this musical training believed nevertheless that these folk songs composed in slavery should be neglected and thrown aside. The uneducated Negroes of the early post bellum years, those above singing folk songs in their churches and not sufficiently advanced for European music, composed a new kind of song, commonly referred to as the 'shouting hymn'.<sup>34</sup> They were thus called because they were sung in the churches on Sunday after the choir had entertained the audience with music which the majority of the congregation could not appreciate. The pastor, in his attempt to meet the spiritual desire of his congregation would permit someone to start from the floor one of these 'soul-stirring' tunes which usually ended in a triumphant shout 'on the way to Glory'.<sup>35</sup>

#### The College and Negro Music

When Fisk, Wilberforce, Howard and Tuskegee, all leading Negro institutions of higher learning, took up the plantation music and staged productions of it throughout the country, some of the most highly educated Negroes objected vigorously. The singing of such songs caused a strike among the study body of Howard University. Wilberforce University forbade folksong singing on its campus. Negroes who believed themselves to be well trained in music, serving in the music department of



these schools, refused to use these folk tunes in any capacity. One reason for this attitude, however, was that the entire American public, lacking in appreciation of the worth of these songs, misunderstood the Negro folk song. The American people of that day saw only the festive side of this music. The tours of the Fisk Jubilee Singers brought out much of the merit of these songs.

#### Mme. Azalia Hackley

Mme. Azalia Hackley, the first of a number of performers to be mentioned in this chapter who used the title 'Madame' evidently in an effort to give themselves distinction, carried on the work of John W. Work and the Fisk Jubilee Singers in the development and exploitation of the early Negro folk songs.

"Madame Azalia Hackley, coloratura soprano, educated in Detroit, Michigan, was known throughout the country in her later years for her deep interest in the promotion of Negro music. She traveled extensively organizing choruses in various cities and closing the period of training with a gala program. The success of her idea is well known and the great popularity of this form of program was a tribute to her." 30

Mme. Hackley, at the height of her career, gave up concertizing in order to devote her talents to giving 'demonstrations' of Negro music. She presented large



Negro choruses, which she had trained, in programs of spirituals and compositions of Negro writers. Her efforts were of two fold importance, for they gained enthusiasm and respect for the songs, and a demand for material from the composers. Madame Hackley presented festivals in various cities after each training period. By this work, she brought out the value of these songs and also trained and prepared musicians who developed into artists both in the performance and composing fields. Among her most noted pupils were Carl Diton, pianist; Clarence Cameron White, violinist and composer; and Nathaniel Dett, pianist, conductor and composer. Carl Diton and Clarence Cameron White were sent abroad for study on scholarships founded by Mme. Hackley from funds procured by her 'demonstrations'.

#### New Interpretation of the Negro Folk Songs

Divested of their comic aspect, the Negro folk songs have become recognized and admired for what they are. Churches gradually began using them again as a vital part of their services, concert managers found it profitable to have their artists sing these numbers on their programs, and many adaptations have been published. The Negro folk songs have won their way both in Europe and in America. Besides Anton Dvorak,



George Gershwin, Roy Harris and John Alden Carpenter, other composers have used such thematic material in their works. Some composers such as Lily Strickland have turned almost entirely to the Negro idiom for their compositions.

### Negro Composers - Early

The achievements of the Negro in music did not stop with the folk songs. In the realm of composition, the Negro has made his contributions to the music culture of America.<sup>37</sup> Many became prominent before the Civil War. As early a period as from 1847 to 1876, the work of a number of American Negro composers was of sufficient merit to get some recognition from the white press. In many large cities such as New Orleans, Philadelphia, Boston, New York and Detroit, some talented Negro musicians turned to classical music as their medium, although the Negro musician was held for the most part to the role of entertainment.

Eugene V. McCarty, of New Orleans, was one of these composers who attempted to work in the classical idiom. In 1840, having won the interest of the French Ambassador to the United States and creole friends, he was accepted as a pupil in voice, harmony and composition at the Imperial Conservatoire in Paris.<sup>38</sup>

his compositions mostly in the Negro folk song idiom



Basil Bares, also of New Orleans, was a pianist and composer. Many of his works were published around 1869. Samuel Snaer, Lucien Lambert, Sidney Lambert and Edmund Dede were other New Orleans Negro composers.<sup>39</sup> Their efforts were greatly influenced by the creole population of New Orleans.

Among other early Negro composers were James Hemmenway of Philadelphia and Edwin Hill of Maryland, who by his musicianship won admission to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1871.

These early American Negro composers evidently attempted to imitate the compositions of European musicians as best they could with their limited musical background, and their music was more of the salon type, as complete a departure as possible from what may be called Negro music. From the days of these earlier Negro composers until the present time, there have been many other such composers. Some have limited themselves to the Negro folk song idiom and others have ventured to standard classical music and have been recognized along with other American writers of music. There are also those who have attempted a synthesis of the two.

#### Harry T. Burleigh

Among the first of these composers who limited his compositions mostly to the Negro folk song idiom



was Harry T. Burleigh. In 1892 he won a scholarship for study with Dvorak at the National Conservatory in New York,<sup>40</sup> It has been related that Burleigh and Dvorak became closely associated musically and that the influence of the acquaintanceship is noted in such Dvorak compositions as 'The New World Symphony'.

Burleigh's arrangements of Negro spirituals were among the first to merit wide popularity, and his 'Deep River' is known throughout the land. Among his other compositions are included two festival anthems, six short piano selections derived from Negro folk music, 'Gloria', a cycle of Saracen songs, 'The Glory of the Day Was in Her Face', 'The Grey Wolf', 'Ethiopia Saluting the Colors', and more than a hundred other songs.

Burleigh was also a noted baritone soloist. Before his death he was one of the featured soloists at the St. George Protestant Episcopal Church in New York, and at a Jewish Synagogue there for more than a quarter of a century.

#### R. Nathaniel Dett

R. Nathaniel Dett, an accomplished pianist, conductor and choir master, was also noted for his compositions. He received sufficient recognition at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio to be awarded a degree in composition. He was another of the composers



recognized for his interpretations of the feelings of the Negro in his songs. His compositions include: 'Listen to the Lambs', a Negro spiritual, 'Juba Dance' a piano solo, 'The Ordering of Moses', a vocal work, 'O Holy Lord', 'Enchantment Suite', and 'Hampton, My Home By the Sea', dedicated to the school where he taught for many years (Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia).

Before his death in 1943, he had also published a collection of songs under the title of 'Religious Folk Songs of the Negro'. In 1935, and 'Lenox Avenue', commissioned

by the Columbia Broadcasting System, was first heard  
Negro Composers - More Recent

#### William Grant Still

Other compositions of William Grant Still include One of the most widely recognized Negro composers, and one of the first of such to receive national acclaim is William Grant Still. He has been the recipient of the Harmon Award, a Rosenwald Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship (several times), commissions from the Columbia Broadcasting System, from Paul Whiteman, and from the New York World's Fair of 1939.<sup>41</sup> Still studied at Oberlin College and with such noted composers as George Chadwick and Edgar Varèse.

About 1925, Still decided definitely to devote himself musically to the development of the Negro idiom and the treatment of Negro themes and subjects.

a Masters of Arts Degree at the American Conservatory in



Three of his larger works form a trilogy; 'Africa', 'Afro-American Symphony' and the 'Symphony in G Minor'. The first version of 'Africa' and the 'Afro-American Symphony' date back to 1930. Both have been played widely, here and abroad. The 'Symphony in G' was introduced by Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1937. 'Kaintuck', for piano and orchestra, commissioned by the League of Composers, had its first performance in Los Angeles, in 1935, and 'Lenox Avenue', commissioned by the Columbia Broadcasting System, was first heard over the air in May 1937.

Other compositions of William Grant Still include the stage works 'La Guablesse' and 'Sahdji', ballets; 'Blue Steel', an opera; 'Troubled Island', another opera to a libretto by Langston Hughes; and considerable film music. A more recent work 'Little Song' was introduced in 1955 by the Jackson Mississippi Symphony Orchestra.

#### William Levi Dawson

William Levi Dawson, former director of the School of Music and of the choir at Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama also has been noted for his compositions. After being educated in schools in Kansas, Dawson received a Masters of Arts Degree at the American Conservatory in



Chicago, and shortly afterwards became the first trombonist in the Chicago Civic Orchestra, the first Negro to occupy such a position.<sup>42</sup>

In 1930 and 1931, Dawson won the Dodman Wanamaker contest for composition. His 'Negro Folk Symphony No. 1' was played several times by Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and broadcast over the Columbia network. Among other compositions are a 'Scherzo for Orchestra', several choral works and a Sonata for Violin and Piano.

#### Howard Swanson

Howard Swanson is another Negro composer who has won national recognition. At the age of 20, Swanson entered the Cleveland Institute of Music, studying composition under Henry Elwell. After graduation Swanson was awarded a Rosenwald Fellowship to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, where he remained until 1941. Among his compositions are: 'Music for Strings', four preludes for voice and piano, and a Sonata for piano. Some of his songs have been performed by such concert artists as Marian Anderson and Helen Thigpen.

Possibly the most noted work of Howard Swanson is 'A Short Symphony', his second symphony which was

University 1945-47

2. Resident of Yaddo 1945 and 1947



given its premier performance by Dimitri Mitropolis and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra on November 23, 1950. This symphony has since been added to the repertory of other major symphony orchestras. In 1952, the Short Symphony by Swanson was judged the best orchestral work performed in New York between October 1950 and the end of 1951 by the New York Music Critics Circle.<sup>43</sup> Also in 1952 Swanson was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and an award from the National Academy of Arts and Letters.

#### Ulysses Kay

At the present time, Ulysses Kay is considered and recognized by many as the foremost of the Negro composers. He has had the distinction of being Vice President of the American Composers Alliance.

Ulysses Kay, a native of Tucson, Arizona, was educated at the University of Arizona from which he graduated in 1938. Further study followed at the Eastman School of Music, Tanglewood, Yale and Columbia Universities. His principal teachers were Bernard Rogers, Howard Hanson, Paul Hindemith and Otto Luening.<sup>44</sup>

Among his fellowships, grants and awards are:

1. Alice M. Ditson Fellow to Columbia University 1946-47

2. Resident of Yaddo 1946 and 1947



3. Broadcast Music Inc. Award 1947
4. Julius Rosenwald Fello 1947-48
5. Grantee of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters 1947
6. Co-winner of the Third Annual George Gershwin Memorial Award 1947
7. Awarded Prix de Rome and Residence at the American Academy in Rome 1949-50
8. Fulbright Fellow to Italy 1950-51
9. Prix de Rome renewed 1951-52

Kay began his musical studies in Tucson where he took piano lessons, later violin and saxophone lessons. He participated in such activities as the high school glee club, marching band and the dance orchestra. Through encouragement of his music professor at the University of Arizona, Kay won a scholarship to Eastman School of Music where he studied with Bernard Rogers and Howard Hanson. There he heard his first orchestral work performed publicly. Later a Tanglewood scholarship enabled him to study with Hindemith during the summer of 1941, and Hindemith aided in getting a scholarship for Kay so he could study with him at Yale during 1941-42.<sup>45</sup>

Returning to New York after a stint in the U.S. Navy, Ulysses Kay enrolled at Columbia University. He was given the task of writing and conducting music for the motion picture 'The Quite One'. This was a wonderful opportunity for Kay as a composer. Following the success



of this commitment came prizes, performances, a two and a half year study at the American Academy in Rome and international prominence.

Among his many compositions are:

1. Ten Pieces for Children (for Piano). This was his first work, 1939.
2. Sinfonietta for Orchestra (First performance by Rochester Civic Orchestra, Howard Hanson, conductor, 1939.
3. Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra, 1940.
4. Sonatina for Violin and Piano, 1942.
5. Of New Horizons (Overture), 1944. Awarded the American Broadcasting Company Prize and Performance by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, May, 1946. First performance by New York Philharmonic, July 1944. Thor Johnson, Conductor.
6. Suite for Orchestra, 1945. Won Broadcast Music, Inc. Prize in 1947. First broadcast by American Youth Orchestra, Town Hall, New York, May 1950. Dean Dixon, Conductor
7. A Short Overture, 1946.
8. Concerto for Orchestra, 1948. First performance in New York, 1954. Recorded by Teatro La Fenice Symphony Orchestra of Venice, Italy, Jonel Perlea, conductor.
9. Film score for motion picture 'The Quiet One', 1948.
10. Sinfonia in E, 1940. First performance by Eastman - Rochester Symphony Orchestra. Howard Hanson, conductor.
11. Serenade for Orchestra, 1954. Commissioned by the Louisville Orchestra. First performance by Louisville Orchestra, 1945.



12. The Boor - one act opera. Commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress.

Also included are many other vocal and instrumental works.

"Ulysses Kay is a composer who refuses to carry a label-technical, racial, stylistic. He writes music that corresponds to his artistic emotions, within a framework of harmony, counterpoint, and orchestration that provides him with the broadest range of expression. He is not automatically satisfied with every piece he writes, simply because it is his." 46

Kay should not be classified as a Negro composer. He is indeed an example of the disappearance of rigid stereotype in contemporary American art. He is a product of Eastman School of Music and the seminars of Columbia University, Tanglewood and Yale; a Prix de Rome winner, a Fulbright Fellow to Italy and a former resident of the American Academy in Rome.

"Little by little, Ulysses Kay entered the charmed circle of young (and, as time passed, not so young) American composers whose biographies were curiously similar; prizes (not too rich but flattering); sojourns at the American Academy in Rome (on grants of millions-not dollars, but of Italian lire); pictures on the music page of the Sunday Times; publication of full orchestral scores (not engraved), but autographed by another, not so fortunate composer, working in a publisher's office; commissions to write for films (the documentary variety for a limited public, on a low budget); membership in a composer's association (paying actual royalties plus additional bonuses) and finally, a serene state of artistic security



(but with a gnawing feeling of inadequacy of reward, and even of inadequacy of one's own music)." 47

### Dean Dixon - Conductor

As a conductor, Dean Dixon is acclaimed as the foremost of the Negro musicians in that phase of musical activity, being the first and one of the few Negroes to conduct a major American symphony orchestra. His appearances with the N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic gained him this distinction. As stated in David Ewens' publication 'Dictators of the Baton':

"Dixon's career is the triumph of talent over the greatest obstacle which can be placed in the way of a young musician acquiring conductorial assignments, race prejudice." 48

Ewen further states:

"It is not an easy road that has brought a Negro to the conductor's stand of two great American orchestras. That the road has, at last, been traversed speaks well both for Dixon's capabilities and for the capacity of true talent to assert itself." 49

Dean Dixon, a native of New York City, attended the Institute of Musical Art there. At the same time, he attended Columbia University where he acquired a Master's Degree and worked on his doctorate degree. He then went to Juilliard Graduate School with a fellowship in conducting. Dixon began conducting when he organized his



own orchestra at a Harlem Branch of the Y.M.C.A. where it grew from a small ensemble to a symphony orchestra of seventy musicians. The orchestra gave annual concerts which soon began to attract music lovers of the area.

His first concert in Town Hall in 1940 led to such assignments as the conductorship of the National Youth Administration Orchestra. His capabilities and interpretations were being noticed by influential individuals in the music world, and after Samuel Chotzinoff, music director of the National Broadcasting Company, was favorably impressed while attending a concert conducted by Dixon at the Hocksher Theatre in New York, he contracted Dixon to direct the N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra for two concerts. Dixon's performance at these concerts won him even higher stature as a recognized conductor.

Currently Dixon is permanent conductor and artistic director of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra in Sweden, one of the leading orchestras there.

"He has also been offered, and plans to accept, an appointment as permanent conductor of the classical music department of Radio Station KOLN in West Germany. The first Negro to win international acclaim as a conductor, Dixon is one of the most respected men in his field in Europe. As a guest conductor, he is in constant demand. His baton has waved over the highest professionals of London, Rome, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Copenhagen, Munich, Oslo, Stockholm and Helsinki." 50

attention had been given to the folk songs of the



The success of Dean Dixon in Europe typifies the plight of many of the American Negroes in the concert field of music whether performer or conductor, for most of them have been forced by traditional customs of America to go to Europe, or some foreign country, to win recognition in their chosen phase of music.

### Concert Artists - Vocal

#### Early Artists

In the concert field, the American Negro has also achieved a measure of national and international acclaim.

Before the Civil War, Thomas Bowers, born in Philadelphia in 1836, was considered as one of the leading tenor soloists. The early critics called him the "American Mario", in comparison with the noted Italian tenor, Signor Conte di Candia Mario, one of the world's most celebrated tenor soloists of that day. <sup>51</sup>

The following comments appeared in the February 9, 1854 edition of the Daily Pennsylvania as a portion of an article heralding a concert given by Thomas Bowers in Philadelphia:

"He has naturally a superior voice, far better than many of the principal tenors who have been engaged for star opera troupes. He has besides, much musical taste." <sup>52</sup>

In the same article appeared the comment that so much attention had been given to the folk songs of the



illiterate and to Negro buffoonery, that few realized how arduously the Negro artists had striven to achieve national recognition. Bowers was quoted as saying:

"What induced me more than anything else to appear in public was to give the lie to 'Negro serenaders' (minstrels), and to show to the world that colored men and women could sing classical music as well as the members of the other race by whom they had been so terribly villified." 53

Also before the Civil War, the Luca family presented concerts throughout the New England states. This family unit performed vocally and instrumentally and included Simeon Luca, who sang first tenor and played first violin, Alexander Luca, who sang soprano and was the pianist, and John Luca, who sang bass and played violoncello. The father fulfilled the duties of director and business manager. As a result of many tours, the group realized much success.

Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield (1809-1876)

Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, known professionally as the 'Black Swan' was brought from Mississippi to Philadelphia when one year old and reared by a Quaker lady, Mrs. Greenfield. In Philadelphia she was educated and musically trained. She became prominent in music circles around 1851 and because of the quality of her voice was compared to the very popular artist, 'Jenny Lind. Among



her many appearances was one in Albany, New York in 1852.

In the audience was the Governor of New York and his family.<sup>54</sup> From a concert in Boston the following comments appeared in the Boston Evening Transcript:

"She sings with great ease, and apparently without any effort. Her pronunciation is very correct, and her intonation excellent. Her voice has a wonderful compass, and in many notes is remarkably sweet in tone."<sup>55</sup>

After further concertizing in the United States, she went to Europe for further study and concert performances.

Among her appearances was a command performance at

Buckingham Palace for Queen Victoria. Her accompaniments

were played by Sir George Smart, organist and composer to

her Majesty's Chapel Royal. Before her death she

opened a studio for vocal students in Philadelphia.<sup>56</sup>

#### Madame Marie Selika

Considered as the greatest of the Negro prima-donnas of yesterday was Mme. Marie Selika (Mrs. Sampson Williams). About 1879, while visiting in San Francisco, California, Mrs. Frances Bailey Gaskin, heard Mrs. Williams sing and recognizing the exceptional quality of her voice, the former persuaded her to come to Boston. This she did, and while making her home with the mother of Mrs. Gaskin, she continued her studies becoming proficient in German, French and Italian. For a stage name she took that of 'Selika', the heroine of Meyerbeer's



opera 'L'Africaine'.

After concertizing in the United States, Madame Selika toured Europe and attained much success. After an appearance in Paris the following review was published:

"Madame Selika sang in great style. She has a very strong voice of depth and compass, raising with a perfect ease from C to C. Her range is marvelous and her execution and style of rendition show perfect cultivation. Her 'Echo Song' cannot be surpassed. It was beyond any criticism. It was an artistic triumph." 57

Her concerts in other cities of France, and in Germany were highly lauded.

After years of concertizing mostly in Europe, Madame Selika returned to the states for further concerts and in 1936 was a teacher of voice at the Martin-Smith School of Music in New York.

#### Flora Batson Bergen

Flora Batson Bergen reached her musical heights in 1887 and impressed audiences in New York and many other American cities. She then sang with great success in Europe, Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Madame Sisseretta Jones (maiden name Matilda S. Joyner)

Madame Jones, known as 'Black Patti' sang in concerts in most of the northern American cities and scored a decided success on tour of the West Indies and



Central America with the Black Patti Troubadours. While a young woman, she developed a remarkable dramatic soprano voice. She was engaged as principal artist at the Madison Square Garden Jubilee from April 26 to 28, 1892. Among other appearances, she appeared at the White House by the invitation of President Harrison, for private musicals at the homes of Chief Justice Fuller, for Senator Andrews and many other distinguished persons.<sup>58</sup>

Among other Negro concert artists who were lauded in America for their talent and performances and later achieved recognition in European cities were Florence Cole Talbert and Madame Lillian Evanti, who appeared in grand opera in Italy. Madame Evanti (Lillian Evans), coloratura soprano, was a member of the Opera Company of Milan Italy. She studied in America and for further studies went to France and became a voice pupil of Madame Ritter-Ciampi and took dramatic instruction from M. Gaston Dupins. After singing again in the United States, she went to Italy where she devoted her time to operatic studies. She made her debut at Nice in the French opera 'Lakme', and in 1930 she sang in opera at Turin, Milan, Palermo and other Italian cities.

#### Caterina Jarbora

After extensive training in Paris and Italy, Caterina Jarbora made several successful concert appearances



in those countries. She later sang the title role of 'Aida' in Milan and other Italian cities. Upon her return to the United States she appeared as 'Aida' with the Chicago Grand Opera Company at the Hippodrome in New York City in 1933.

### Jules Bledsoe

Jules Bledsoe is considered one of the most versatile Negro singers because his repertory included songs in the opera vein, musical comedy and music-drama. He appeared in the role of the warrior king in the production of 'Aida' which featured Caterina Jabora in the title role.

### More Recent and Popular Vocal Artists

#### Roland Hayes

Among the more recent and popular Negro concert artists to achieve national and international acclaim and one of the foremost, is Roland Hayes, long accepted as one of America's leading tenor soloists.

Hayes received his general education at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Some twenty-five or more years after his graduation he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Arts Degree.

As leading tenor with the noted Fisk Jubilee Singers, Hayes appeared in concerts in Boston, Massachusetts



in 1911 and attracted the attention of the music public there. Soon afterwards he became a student of Arthur Hubbard of Boston. Hayes made his Boston debut at Jordan Hall in the 1915-16 season, and gave a more remunerative recital in Boston Symphony Hall in 1917. Two seasons of concert tours followed.<sup>59</sup>

In 1920, Hayes went to England, making his London debut at the Aeolian Hall on May 31 and receiving many favorable notices. In 1921, he sang for King George V and Queen Mary at Buckingham Palace, a command performance. Later in 1921, he studied in London with Sir George Herschel. He made his Paris debut in 1922 and sang in Germany, Spain and Italy the following year.

When Hayes returned to the United States for a 1923-24 concert tour, he had become widely known as an established artist. This was to a considerably extent the result of his European success, although his talent had already been recognized by American critics. Years of constant concert activity followed.

In 1924 he received the Spingarn Medal, awarded annually for high achievement by an American of African descent.

"Hayes' most distinctive achievements have been his memorable interpretations of Negro spirituals and his contributions towards making them well known on the American and European concert stage, but



he is also deservedly noted as a sensitive and discerning interpreter of the international concert repertory. Distinctness of enunciation is one of the assets of his expressive persuasiveness of his singing. The success of his career has also materially advanced the position of Negro singers in the American concert field." 60

Roland Hayes is currently on the music faculty of Boston University, and his concert appearances are at a minimum.

Paul Robeson

Another popular figure on the concert stage for many years was Paul Robeson, bass-baritone singer. Robeson received his A.B. degree from Rutgers University in 1919 and an honorary M.A. degree in 1932. While at Rutgers, Robeson was a football player of all-american stature.

He made his stage debut on Broadway in New York in 1922 in 'Taboo'. With two parts in plays by Eugene O'Neill, 'Jim Harris' in 'All God's Chillun Got Wings', (N.Y. 1924) and 'Brutus Jones' in a revival of 'The Emperor Jones' (1925) he became prominent on the stage. After Robeson made his London debut in 1925, he soon came to be regarded both in the U.S.A. and in Britian as one of the foremost actors of his time.<sup>61</sup> One of his most outstanding roles was as 'Othello', which he played in London in 1931 and in America from 1943 until 1945.



Robeson's career as a singer began with a recital of Negro spirituals in New York in 1925, with Lawrence Brown as his piano accompanist. His power and quality of voice soon made him well known as a concert singer also.

He made concert tours in Britain in 1928 and later on the continent of Europe in 1929 and 1930, and paid his first visit to Russia in 1934. Spirituals were his speciality but he soon added folk songs of various countries to his repertoire. Among other appearances was one in the production of Jerome Kern's 'Showboat', and for a while the name of Paul Robeson became closely associated with the song from Showboat, 'Ole Man River', which he performed so dynamically. He also appeared in several movies beginning in 1933.

Since the end of the Second World War he has given many concerts in the U.S.A. and in Europe, but his outspoken sympathy for the Soviet Union has made his activities in recent years increasingly political in character. However, just recently Robeson obtained his passport for European travel and has presented a number of successful concerts there.

#### Marian Anderson

Without a doubt, for many years the most prominent of the female American Negro concert singers



has been Marian Anderson. She will go down in musical history for having the distinction of being the first Negro to be signed for a featured role with the Metropolitan Opera Company. She was signed for the 1954-1955 season. The following article appeared in the music column of Time Magazine:

"From the time contralto Marian Anderson first realized she had a remarkable voice, she wanted to sing at the Metropolitan Opera. In those days, hiring a Negro artist was unthinkable at the Met. She went on the concert stage instead, and became one of the great recitalists of all times. But last week, fiftyish and famous as ever, she sat down with Met's General Manager Bing, and signed up for a starring role this winter." 62

Her performance as Ulrica, in Verdi's 'Masked Ball' received very favorable comments from the music critics and the press.

Marian Anderson was educated in the schools of Philadelphia and studied singing with Guiseppe Bopphett. Her teacher entered her in competition among three hundred entrants for an appearance with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in 1925 at the Lewisohn Stadium, New York, and she won first place. Through the intervention of Mrs. Carl Diton, the National Association of Negro Musicians Inc. presented her with a scholarship for further study. After years of training she was sent to Europe in 1933. Her first important European



recital was in London. Then to France, Holland, Belgium Italy and other European countries.

Since then Marian Anderson has appeared in most of the larger cities of the world, and has appeared with many of the major symphony orchestras in America on radio, television, and has been hailed for her depth and control of her voice and interpretations.

Among other recognized Negro concert artists are Dorothy Maynor, Anna Brown, Carol Brice, Helen Thigpen, Muriel Rhan, Todd Duncan, Etta Moten and William Warfield, who appeared in the more recent movie version of 'Showboat', and later sang the title role of 'Porgy' in a road production of 'Porgy and Bess'. Leontyne Price, wife of William Warfield, who sang the role of 'Bess' in the same production also appeared in a television version of the opera 'Tosca'. Her performance was acclaimed in the following review:

"In the U.S. it is still news when a Negro stars in grand opera, even in a role calling for a dark skin. Marian Anderson's Metropolitan Opera debut as the Negro Ulrica, in Un Ballo in Maschera (Time, Jan. 17), made fortissimo headlines, and this week baritone, Robert McFerrin is causing another stir at the Met by singing the Ethiopian King Amonasro in Aida. The N.B.C. Opera Theatre was even bolder; this week it cast Leontyne Price, 26, as the Italian singer, Tosca.

Producer Samuel Chotzinoff sent Soprano Price before the cameras without special makeup. At first sight her striking featured look rather exotic, although the TV screen virtually



wiped out the color contrast between her and other singers. But as Puccini's melodramatic opera proceeded, Soprano Price's quietly expressive acting began to tell and she became Floria Tosca, coquettish in the arms of her handsome lover (handsomely sung by Tenor David Poleri), murderous in the arms of the villainous police chief (Baritone, Josh Wheeler), and distraught at her lover's death. Vocally, she was head and shoulders above the others, crooning pearly high notes here, dropping into gutty dramatic tones there. She sang the great second-act aria, 'Vissa d'arte' (rendered in English as 'Love of beauty') with a flair worthy of the Met. Except for clumsy phrasing in the translation ('How your hatred enhances my resolve to possess you!'), and a phlegmatic but overbearing orchestra, TV's first Tosca was a rattling good show.

Soprano Price started her musical career playing the piano at parties and funerals back home in Laurel, Mississippi where her father was a carpenter. At Central State College in Ohio, she expected to take a music education degree, instead discovered her voice (All of a sudden you open your mouth and begin'). She won a Juilliard scholarship, decided to try an opera career despite the fact that at most a dozen roles in the standard repertory are usually considered 'suitable' for female Negro singers. After a rousing debut in a Juilliard production of Falstaff, Soprano Price won the lead in the world traveling revival of 'Porgy and Bess'. (She later married her leading man, Baritone, William Warfield.)

Bess and Tosca are not so very different, thinks Leontyne. 'Things happened to Bess and she wasn't strong enough to control them. Tosca could control what happened to her better. Both were strumpets, only Tosca dressed better.' 63



Mattiwilda Dobbs

Mattiwilda Dobbs, of Atlanta, Georgia, who made her New York debut in a Town Hall concert in 1954, is another Negro singer who has achieved national and international recognition. In 1955, she made a most successful forty-six concert tour of Australia sponsored by the Australian Broadcasting Company. Recently she was signed by the Metropolitan Opera Company for the 1956-57 season, and made her debut with this renowned opera company in Verdi's opera 'Rigoletto' portraying the role of 'Gilda'. Her performance was acclaimed in the following news release:

"Mattiwilda Dobbs, 29 year old coloratura soprano from Atlanta, Georgia, was at home on the Metropolitan Opera stage Friday night and she made her cheering guests happy that she was there.

Miss Dobbs became the third Negro to sing a principal role with the famed company. Two seasons ago, Marian Anderson and Robert McFerrin joined the Metropolitan.

Singing 'Gilda' in Verdi's 'Rigoletto' Miss Dobbs had her first experience with the role in its original Italian. She sang 'Gilda' before in Convent Garden in London in English.

Critics were lavish in their praise of Miss Dobbs' debut. A brilliant future was predicted for her. Her audience was captivated by the warmth and natural beauty of her voice which is unusually big and full for a coloratura. She displayed little if any signs of nervousness and moved about the stage with confidence."<sup>64</sup>



Another of the noteworthy performances of Negro vocal artists was in the all Negro version of Bizet's opera 'Carmen' (Carmen Jones). Among these vocal performers were St. Louisan, Laverne Hutcherson, who sang the leading male role of 'Joe', which was portrayed by Harry Belafonte, Marilyn Horne, who sang the title role of 'Carmen', which was portrayed by Dorothy Dandridge, Olga James and Marvin Hayes.

#### Instrumental Music

In the instrumental music field, the Negro has not been given the same opportunities for achievement as has been afforded Negro vocal artists. Negro singers have been featured with major symphony orchestras, on radio, television and on the concert stage, but the Negro instrumentalists have had few opportunities for such accomplishments. There are no Negro instrumentalists in any major symphony in the U.S.

#### Performers

Before the Civil War, Justin Holland, of Cleveland, performer on the guitar, flute and piano, published a book of instruction for the guitar entitled 'Modern Method for the Guitar!'. His book became a standard for some of the guitarists of that day.<sup>65</sup>

W. L. Dabney, of Cincinnati, Ohio, after using Holland's method book became one of the leading



guitarists of his time.

Joseph H. Douglas, grandson of the Honorable Frederick Douglas, noted Negro education and statesman, attained some distinction as a violinist. It may be interesting to note that Frederick Douglas also played the violin.

Clarence Cameron White developed into one of the leading Negro performers on the violin and he was presented in concerts throughout the country. His opera 'Ouanga' based on Haitian history was one of his greater undertakings. This opera was performed at Carnegie Hall in New York on September 27, 1956 by the National Opera Company under the direction of Mary Cardwell Dawson.

As performers on the piano, there have been many Negroes who have appeared in concert in many of the cities of America and in foreign countries. Unfortunately, many of these have been forced to go to Europe or some other country out of the United States to make concertizing their livelihood and to obtain some recognition.

Among these are R.A. Lawson, Helen Hagan, Rob Tibbs, Phillipa Schuyler, Dorothea Towles and Eugene Haynes, of East St. Louis, Illinois, who will be discussed in a later chapter.

Thomas Green Bethune, better known as 'Blind Tom' born blind in slavery, lived until 1908 and impressed the



public with his performances on the piano. His reproductions on the piano of almost everything he heard, including birds, the wind, rain and thunder were considered quite a feat. The following information from a copy of a handbill announcing a concert to be played by Blind Tom, demonstrates how he was billed for his performances. This could be likened to a side show attraction of this day, but clearly illustrates how such a performer was built up.

"IRVING HALL

Irving Place, between 14th and 15th Streets opposite Academy of Music

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING

May 13, 1868

BLIND TOM'S CONCERTS

The management would respectfully announce that in consequence of the greatly increasing interest manifested by the public, and in compliance with the expressed desire of many citizens who have as yet been unable to witness the Marvelous Performance of TOM, have decided to remain in New York for A FEW MORE NIGHTS MORE but must positively close with the Present Week.

BLIND TOM MATINEES

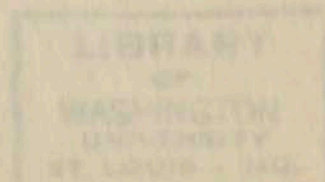
Will be given during the week as usual, at half past 2 o'clock on the afternoons of WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY

TOM!

The Blind Negro Boy - of Musical Inspiration. Sightless and untutored from birth - his very soul overflowing with musical genius. This youth is a remarkable Phenomenon in one direction only, and that is his wonderful aptness of the

PIANO FORTE!

There is no art about him. God has given him a guide, but it is a silent one, that of nature herself. The





manipulations of the Great Masters of the day, are the sole efforts of deep and unwearied study. His instruction comes from Higher Power, and this, Philosophers are pleased to term, Genius.

The Richest and Most Difficult

MUSICAL GEMS are to this  
Wonderful Prodigy but a mere

SONG OF FACILITY

which he plays with all the  
Purity of expression and  
Brilliance of Execution that  
will Perfectly Astonish his  
Hearers.

He is a Perfect

PRODIGY

And thousands before  
whom he has had the  
honor of appearing  
have expressed the most  
UNBOUND SATISFACTION and  
delight at his WONDERFUL  
POWERS AS A PIANIST.

### THIS BLIND NEGRO BOY

-The SON OF ORDINARY SOUTHERN FIELD HANDS!  
Is presented to a critically Discriminating Public with  
full confidence in his ability to sustain himself as a  
COMPOSER AND MUSICIAN of skill and excellence before  
acquired by an individual but after years of laborious  
study. In proof of this, he can execute

### THREE AIRS AT ONCE

He can, however long or difficult the piece  
IMITATE IT UPON HEARING IT ONCE ONLY without understanding  
a single rudiment of written music he CAN COMPOSE GEMS  
OF RARE ARTISTIC ABILITY. He can PERFORM THE SECUNDO TO  
ANY PIECE OF MUSIC. that can be produced THEN CHANGING  
SEATS, PLAY THE PRIMO. He can PERFORM CORRECT MUSIC with  
HIS BACK TO THE PIANO. In fact

### HE IS A WONDER

such as the world never before beheld, or, in all  
probability never will again; therefore it is a duty you  
owe to yourself to

### GO AND HEAR HIM

This wonderful Negro boy, who is now attracting attention  
throughout the country, was blind from his birth; yet he  
plays the most difficult operatic pieces not only  
brilliantly and beautifully, but with all the taste, expression  
and feeling of the most distinguished artist. He was born  
in Georgia, and was caressed and petted, as all Negro  
children were about a Plantation in the South, and more  
particularly those afflicted with so terrible an



infirmity as the loss of sight. But when the veil of darkness was drawn over his eyes, as if to make amends for the infliction upon the poor Negro boy a flood of light was poured into his brain, and his mind became an Opera of Beauty, written by the Hand of God in syllables of music for the delight of the world. He is presented to the public as surpassing everything hitherto known to the world as a MUSICAL PHENOMENON.

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The Piano used at Blind Tom's concerts is from the celebrated manufactory of Messrs. STEINWAY AND SONS.<sup>67</sup>

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William Boone, commonly known as 'BLIND BOONE', also delighted the public with his piano artistry. He will be discussed fully in a later chapter.

One of the greater accomplishments of the Negro as an instrumentalist was the appointing of Ortiz M. Walton as one of the bass viol players with the Boston Symphony Orchestra for the fall season of 1957. He had the distinction of being the first Negro to become a member of a major symphony in America.

Unfortunately contract problems and apparently stranger circumstances resulted in this appointment lasting only a few weeks.

(For letter received from manager of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and also one received from Walton concerning Walton and his association with the Boston Symphony Orchestra see Appendix No. ~~XXIII~~ )



### The Gospel Song

The gospel song, the most recent of the Negro religious songs, was originated about twenty-five years ago by Thomas A. Dorsey of Chicago.<sup>67</sup> This type of religious song has become very popular throughout the country, and is performed not only in the churches but also in the larger auditoriums and other public places throughout the country. The gospel song has afforded financial success to the many performers and composers who have turned to this type of song as their music medium.

The gospel song is characterized by syncopated rhythm, and improvisations. Interpretation of the artist is the greatest factor in the performance of these songs. They are seldom performed as written, and in conversation with some of the artists, it has been stated that almost every individual has a different interpretation of them. As in many of the other songs of the Negro, the tonic to dominant progression is predominant in the gospel song, also the flatted seventh and the flatted third are frequently used. The adlib rhythmic keyboard accompaniment to the gospel song gives the needed spirit that usually arouses the emotions of the congregation, and many ministers use it for this purpose before their sermons.



The popularity of the gospel song has resulted in many singers turning to the field of gospel singing from secular phases of music. The president and founder of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs, Inc.,

Thomas A. Dorsey states:

"Once upon a time, singers of gospel songs felt the need of being born again, and leading a life that would be in keeping with the songs they sang; but now some of our singers come out of night clubs, dance halls and from the stage and feature themselves as gospel singers.

We have lost the worship in our songs by trying to commercialize too heavily on them. The record companies now are commercializing on our church music, and our singers; they get a song struck singer, tell him this is your chance to become famous, give him about \$10.00 to make the record, then make him sign all the rights of his song over to the record company. They won't let him sing the song in the spirit of worship, but change and jazz it up in 'be-bop' and blues style to make it sell, and be more popular in taverns and other public places that have juke boxes, than in churches where gospel songs belong.

Many of our churches throughout the country have become show places, rather than houses of worship; and the christian people will pay high admission fees to hear our church songs and hymns butchered up by some singers who are the tools of record companies who are getting rich at the expense of our songs by eliminating the worship and deep spiritual meaning from our gospel songs."<sup>68</sup>

There are many individuals who have achieved national fame in the field of gospel singing. Probably the most noted of these is Mahalia Jackson of Chicago, Illinois.



Hailed as the queen of the gospel song, Mahalia Jackson opened the door of success for the many others in the field of religious music. She was acclaimed in the following article:

"Blues singing is one thing, gospel singing another. The blues are jazz, gospel singing is a form of the old time spiritual. The twain just don't meet.

Yet, listeners to Mahalia Jackson, queen of gospel singers, insist on speaking in terms of Bessie Smith, the great blues shouter whose records sold in the millions back in the gay 1920's.

Mahalia Jackson is a deeply religious woman who wouldn't think of singing the rowdy, often naughty ballads waxed by the late Bessie. She won't, in fact, sing or broadcast or record any kind of song that is not spiritual or inspirational, and she won't consider any offer to appear in a night club.

Mahalia came to Chicago to study beauty culture, made ends meet by cooking and doing domestic work and joined the Greater Salem Baptist Church. There she made a name for herself in the choir, visited other churches to sing, made a couple of radio appearances, cut a record or two on extremely obscure labels, even went on tour now and then.

The general radio and television audiences didn't know of her until a few months ago. But for years, when she sang at the Chicago Coliseum, she packed the huge place. When she gave concerts in ball parks down south thousands jammed the grandstands. Five times she filled Carnegie Hall with audiences who didn't make it a practice to frequent that haughty chamber of culture. Her recording of 'In the Upper Room' sold 1,000,000 copies.

The following information was obtained from Kenneth Miller, Director of the Gospel Choir at the



A Mahalia Jackson couldn't stay undiscovered forever - even by the pundits of radio and television. A few months ago she signed a long term contract with Columbia Broadcasting System and started a series of Sunday night broadcasts."<sup>69</sup>

Among other leading gospel singers are Clara Ward of Detroit, Michigan, Roberta Martin, Willa Mae Ford of St. Louis, Brother Joe May of East St. Louis, Illinois, the Smith Singers of Glendale, Ohio, the Sallie Martin Singers, and Johnnie Howard Franklin of St. Louis.<sup>70</sup>

Among the leading composers of gospel songs are Thomas A. Dorsey, Kenneth Morris, Kenneth Bowles, Doris Akers, Fred Harris, A. B. Windom of St. Louis, Theodore Frye of Chicago, Illinois, Alex Bradford and Robert Anderson.<sup>71</sup>

Many of the composers have their own publishing house, which is needed to fill the demands for gospel songs in the churches throughout the country. Among these are Theodore Frye, whose publishing house is in Chicago, Illinois and Kenneth Bowles, whose publishing house is also in Chicago.

The gospel song is used in many of the protestant churches, more predominantly in the baptist churches. Most of these churches have a gospel chorus, which is used along with the regular church choir.

The following information was obtained from Kenneth Miller, Director of the Gospel Choir at the



At the Antioch Baptist Church in St. Louis, Missouri:

"Gospel Music

Definitions:

One writer has defined it, "An expression of the soul through song!"

Another says, "It is a prop to lean on when you are burdened."

A prominent Minister in Atlanta remarked:

"To me it serves as an appetizer before a meal and a desert after a meal, that it placed his congregation in a receptive mood for his sermon, that it served as a climax at the close of his sermon."

"Gospel music got its beginning about 25 years ago, when Mr. Thomas A. Dorsey, who was at that time director of one of the Choirs at Pilgrim Baptist Church of Chicago, Illinois suffered a very hard and long sick spell. It was there on his sick bed that he composed two of our most favorite gospel numbers, "Closer Walk With Thee" and "Precious Lord, Take My Hand".

This is where Gospel music got its start. Then, like a spark of fire it started spreading throughout the nation...in different churches. Others who heard it became inspired and started writing and composing Gospel numbers. Miss Lucy Campbell, Kenneth Morris, A.B. Windom and others.

In gospel songs I find a source of comfort when I am burdened and distressed; in it I find joy when I am in sorrow ... feel as if something has been lifted off of me.

By no means is Gospel Music liked by everyone. In some cases it is poorly written. It is syncopation the way some interpret it ... some have taken the spiritual side away from it and made it commercial.



When traveling on the high seas I found (during my army days) that My Heavenly Father watches over me. He knows just how much you can bear ... Sometimes Within Me and Thank You All the Days of My Life are my greatest sources of comfort."

#### Other Composers of Religious Songs

Among other Negro composers of religious songs, perhaps the most outstanding, is Lucie Campbell of Memphis, Tennessee. I attended a musical program at the Central Baptist Church in Saint Louis which featured the musical compositions of Lucie Campbell. I was amazed to find that so many familiar songs were the compositions of Lucie Campbell. Among these were: 'Nobody Else but Jesus', 'Is He Yours', 'Heavenly Sunshine', 'Awake For Thy God Reigneth', 'I Need Thee Precious Lord', 'He'll Understand', 'They That Wait Upon The Lord', 'A Sinner Like Me'; and one of my favorites, 'Something Within'.

The composer spoke of the many incidents and inspirations that prompted her to write these songs. Many of her testimonials were typical of the sincerity and expressions of earlier Negro religious song writers.

"Miss Lucie Campbell was born in Mississippi and educated in Memphis Public Schools. She received her A.B. from Rust College and her Master's from A. and I. University in Tennessee. Miss Campbell has been active in Baptist circles many years and is the only living member of the committee called to organize the National Baptist congress. She is the past President of Tennessee Regular Baptist Women's Convention. She is a



retired public school teacher. At present, she is the Minister of Music of the Bethesda Baptist Church in Memphis, and Music Director of the National Baptist Sunday School and Baptist Training Union Congress." 72

Other Negro composers of religious music include Carl Diton, Nathaniel Dett, Gene Starr, William Dawson, W.C. Handy, Antonio Haskell, formerly of Saint Louis and now a resident of Dayton, Ohio, and Florence Price.

#### Development of Jazz in America

Religious Songs, work songs, and other social songs were not the only contributions of the American Negro to music. After emancipation with the feeling of being a part of the American way of living, the songs of the Negro took on a different character. The realization that there could be happiness in America gave him the feeling that he was here to stay.

As the spirituals, work songs, and other folk songs gave vent to the suppressed feeling of these people, popular songs were created to express this new feeling of freedom and some satisfaction that they, the Negroes, could enjoy life as other Americans. The blues, ragtime, and jazz were introduced to the American public and each developed into a standard style of popular music. These songs were not accepted by American society during their embryonic stage, but as the styles were developed, they



became an important contribution of the Negro to the music of America and the world.

### Ragtime

When the Negroes gained access to legitimate musical instruments such as the cornet, trombone and clarinet, they no longer had to be dependent for their musical expression solely on the human voice and primitively made rhythm instruments. Small bands were soon organized in various cities of the south. Within a period of fifteen years after the end of the Civil War, Negro bands had become fairly common for marching and various musical activities.

"As pianos were not included in the marching bands for obvious reasons, the pianists were left to fend for themselves. Consequently they were more ruggedly individual, though their influences were the same. Instead of playing in the streets, they were obliged to perform wherever a piano could be found. Most frequently this was in a saloon or a brothel. These colored pianists, with their choppy seemingly erratic style, were the first producers of jazz. This was called 'ragtime'. There is evidence that there were published rags as far back as 1884, suggesting that their origin was much earlier."<sup>73</sup>

Ragtime, essentially a syncopated pianistic art, was made popular by such Negro pianists as Scott Joplin, Tom Turpin, James P. Johnson, James Scott and Charlie Thompson.<sup>74</sup> The Maple Leaf Rag, composed by Scott Joplin is considered as one of the most noted of the published



ragtime. As is the case of most creative styles, ragtime

has been discussed by many individuals and various definitions and expressions have been made in describing this musical trend. Generally speaking, ragtime was applied to music marked by ragged time or tempo and syncopation. As expressed in the booklet 'Jazz from Columbia': This became a very popular dance soon after.

"Ragtime, the predecessor of jazz was a mixture of European light music and the folk music both Negro and White of the Southern United States in the late nineteenth century. The Negro pianists who developed it considered themselves serious composers, as indeed they were."<sup>75</sup>

As expressed by Kay Thompson, television and radio star and writer, on one of her publications:

"In common with most of the world's best music, ragtime evolved from dancing. Unlike the earlier folk blues, which were a vocal music derived from work songs and spirituals, ragtime was an instrumental art of a complex sort. Before the end of the 19th century, it had achieved an advanced state of notation. Furthermore, unlike the early folk blues, which expressed the inevitable reactions of an oppressed and sensitive people, ragtime was by no means a music of social protest. On the contrary, it was music of an altogether opposite mood intended to be enjoyed in and for itself."<sup>76</sup>

This adaptation and transformation of dance material coming from quadrilles, waltzes, marches, polkas, mazurkas and the like, shows the fusions of the many nationalities in America, and the integration of the American



Negro into this society. As soon as these musicians began to transform this earlier dance material, newer and more appropriate dance steps were introduced. In the 1880's early rags were often called cake walks, named after the dance of the same name. These dances were so named because during dance contests, popular pastimes of the day, a cake was awarded to the winning couples. This became a very popular dance soon after. According to Kay Thompson in her article on ragtime, the early dances originated by the Negroes on the plantations are believed to have inspired the Afro-American to invent the banjo, often called our only national instrument.<sup>77</sup>

The peak period of ragtime compositions came in the 1890's and lasted until around 1917. A later more commercial adaptation of the early rags was Irving Berlin's composition 'Alexander's Ragtime Band' which has become a standard in the annals of popular music.

Ragtime was considered much more complex rhythmically than any music of the Negro that preceded it, and much of the music created by the Negro afterwards. The development of jazz soon followed and attained greater popularity than ragtime.



## Jazz

Jazz came into being during the latter part of the 19th century, and began among the Negroes of New Orleans. For many years jazz was not accepted as a standard form of music, but its value to the music of America has been recognized both here and abroad since it is one form of instrumental music that is indigenously American, and has lasted through the years in its various forms. Such phases of music as dixieland, swing, bebop, and what is now termed as modern or progressive jazz, owe their existence to the jazz that began in New Orleans.

Attempts to define jazz have resulted in many controversial statements. As expressed in the book 'Jazz Americana' it is stated:

"Any attempt to define jazz must be arbitrary; the absolute is not found in this medium. It must be further realized that any useful definition of jazz must encompass all styles and concepts within that medium from the very beginning to the present, with the additional capacity to include and anticipate all that jazz may produce in the future."<sup>78</sup>

Woody Woodward submits this definition:

"Jazz, a native American music begun by the Negro, originally influenced by African and Carribean rhythms and popular music available to the Negro around the turn of the twentieth century. A product of the instantaneous rather than the premediated, characterized from the beginning to the present by three basic elements: improvisation, a unique time conception, and a range of sounds distinguished by their individuality."<sup>79</sup>



In the International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians, jazz is described in this manner:

"The word itself has been ascribed various origins, and seems to have been used for some time by the Negro as a synonym for rhythmic excitement."<sup>89</sup>

Rudi Blesh, author of many periodicals on jazz, and a recognized authority on this phase of popular music says:

"It, jazz, began not merely as one more form of Negro folk music in America, but as a fusion of all the Negro music already present here. These, the work song, spiritual, rag-time, and blues, all stemmed back more or less completely to African spirit and technique. Negro creative power, suddenly freed as the Negroes themselves were freed from slavery, took all of this music and added elements of American white folk songs. It added as well the music and the distinct instrumentation of the marching (brass) bands and the melodies of French dances (memories even from the French Opera House) the quadrille, polka, waltz, the rhythms and tunes of Spanish America and many other musical elements."<sup>81</sup>

It is stated in Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians that:

"In the history of music, jazz occupies a place entirely apart."<sup>82</sup>

As jazz is further discussed in Groves Dictionary, it is stated:

"Imported from Africa as slaves, these Negroes had preserved the dances, the songs and gongs of their native continent. Once converted to Christianity by American missionaries, they began to sing the religious canticles they were taught, but



not without transforming them according to the musical genius of their race. Without as much as realizing it, the American Negroes imported to these canticles the rhythmic impetuosity of their inflections the effect of which was rhythmic rather than harmonic. Pieces that were in common time were violently stressed on the weak (second and fourth) beats of the bar. Above all, they made abundant use of extensive repetitions of short and strongly rhythmic phrases (riffs, as they came to be called in jazz terminology)." 83

No doubt many of the first jazz musicians played by ear, or by rote, as many of them were devoid of such musical knowledge as key signature, notation, harmonic structure and chord progression. The characteristic element of their music was self expression. Following the tradition of creators of other songs originated by the Negro, these performers used their music as an emotional release and expression of innate feeling, having no idea that their efforts would result in an instrumental style that would last through the years.

"The first jazz bands in New Orleans, usually consisted of a rhythm section of three players (string bass, drums and guitar or banjo, to which a pianoforte soon came to be added, and a 'melodic section including one or two cornets, a trombone, a clarinet, sometimes even a violin. These bands generally performed in the streets or in the surrounding country, but they were not long in obtaining engagements to play for dancing in the night cabarets of New Orleans and other southern towns. Toward the end of the first World War, larger numbers of jazz



musicians moved up the Mississippi and went to establish themselves in Chicago, which from 1920 onwards became the first import centre of jazz music for nearly 10 years. Thence jazz radiated to New York, to California, to the whole of the U.S.A. and eventually to all the world."<sup>84</sup>

From this beginning, jazz went through many stages of development. Many white musicians formed bands similar in makeup to the first Negro jazz groups and played some of the same music, but not possessing the musical heritage and background of the Negroes, and lacking a really emotional understanding of the blues and the spirituals, their jazz underwent some changes.

"Moreover, the white American public being ignorant of the authentic Negro music, most of the white bands in order to please the public, deliberately offered it an easy-going and vulgar music that had nothing but its name in common with jazz. Only the similarity of the instruments used and of the themes played could deceive the unwary. The word 'Jazz' was thus applied to two quite distinct kinds of music: that of the Negroes, which was alone authentic, and that of 'commercial' white bands such as those of Paul Whiteman in the U.S.A. and Jack Hylton in England."<sup>85</sup>

In the souvenir program for the 1955 jazz festival held in Newport, Rhode Island, the following was noted:

"Dance music revealing most of the characteristics of the Negro idiom had its first vogue in 1914 when white bands from New Orleans were imported as novelty attractions by Chicago cafe proprietors. The name jazz was applied to the music, derisively, in the latter city, where the word had an obscene meaning and proved of inestimable publicity value. The music



musicians was immediately and variously counter-  
 feited by many band leaders who were not  
 at home in the idiom but wished to cash in  
 on its success and developed such as they  
 were able. Instead of blue texture, there  
 were blue notes. Instead of vocalized  
 instrumentalism there were vocal imitations -  
 cornet baby cries and laughing trombones.  
 Instead of subtle polyrhythms there was any  
 kind of syncopated clatter the musicians  
 could furnish, abetted by drummers with sets  
 of kitchen utensils. The name jazz was  
 appropriated by all of the din makers."86

It was further noted in this souvenir program:

"Various aspects of jazz were vaguely  
 reflected in the music of many finished and  
 fashionable dance orchestra leaders, the most  
 famous of whom was Paul Whiteman. In the  
 early 1930's Negroid jazz began to grow in  
 popularity, the chief reason being the  
 programs of certain bands on national radio  
 networks. In order to distinguish the music  
 from the generality of 4/4 dance music also  
 known as jazz, decotees of the former began  
 calling it swing - a word which Negro  
 musicians had long used as a verb with  
 obviously rhythmic connotations. But no sooner  
 did this word show signs of having commercial  
 drawing power it was appropriated by as wide  
 a variety of dance musicians and applied as  
 ambiguously by the public as the word jazz had  
 been years before."87

#### Early Jazz Musicians

Among the early Negro exponents of jazz music was  
 Buddy (King) Bolden of New Orleans, organizer of one of  
 the first jazz bands. Bolden was one of the first trumpet  
 players of the jazz era to be called 'King', a title given  
 to the supposedly jazz leader of a certain period. Much of  
 the success of jazz is credited to the early efforts and



musicianship of Buddy Bolden. It has been said that Buddy Bolden probably did more than any other to establish the New Orleans jazz style. As stated in a publication by Rudi Blesch:

"Buddy Bolden's Ragtime Band of 1893 generally considered the first jazz band, undoubtedly represents the transition from the archaic street jazz to a more developed classic stage. Bolden's band was well developed technically and had a much wider repertory than march tunes. To 'rag' a tune, he'd take one note and put two or three to it. He began to teach them - not by the music - just by the head. After he'd get it down right, he'd teach the others their part."<sup>88</sup>

It was also stated that Bolden was a regular church goer and that he derived his basic jazz idead from church music.

Other early jazz leaders include trumpet players Freddie 'King' Keppard, and Joseph 'King' Oliver, who migrated to Chicago and influenced the early Chicago jazz style. Ferdinand 'Jelly Roll' Morton, one of the early jazz pianists, became somewhat of a jazz immortal and one of the leading New Orleans jazz composers. It is written in publication by Rudi Blesch:

"Morton was a composer in the only sense that the term can exist in jazz. He created nearly one hundred and fifty beautiful melodies adapted to jazz playing, and his thinking was orchestral. More than any other individual, he knew the requirements of jazz; how to employ arrangement to heighten improvisation, the solo to heighten ensemble, dissonance to heighten harmony."<sup>89</sup>



Among other early Negro jazz leaders were Tony Jackson, pianist; Sidney Becchet, soprano sax soloist, who after achieving prominence as a jazz musician in Chicago and New York, went to Paris where he is now considered as one of the top artists in the jazz field; Willie 'Bunk' Johnson, trumpet player, who after many years in New Orleans, went to New York and reestablished himself as a top jazz figure. At the time of his death in 1949 he was enjoying a profitable acclaim as a rejuvenated jazz pioneer. Also from New Orleans were John Robichaux, Armand Piron, Walter 'Fats' Pichon, and Oscar 'Papa' Celestine, who also was enjoying new fame at the time of his death in 1954 at the age of 71. Celestine, a trumpet player, began his musical career at the age of 10 about the time Buddy Bolden led the marching and dancing jazz band in New Orleans. He was noted for his simple jazz horn playing without the hot improvisations that some of his contemporaries became famous for. He played a strong lead that included jazz figures.<sup>90</sup>

Other early jazz leaders include Henry 'Red' Allen, also of New Orleans and still active as a performing musician in New York; George 'Pops' Foster, bass viol performer; Lonnie Johnson and the immortal Louis Armstrong, who is still considered as one of the top jazz trumpet players. The accomplishments of Louis Armstrong in the field of jazz has helped keep this phase



of popular music as an important phase of American music. He has often appeared in Europe and other sections of the world. The State Department of the United States has sent him to foreign countries as a musical ambassador.<sup>91</sup>

#### James Reese Europe

"Credited with being the first group of musicians to introduce jazz to Europe, the 369th Regimental Band led by Lieutenant James Reese Europe, became famous on the battle fronts during the first World War. Its drum major was Sergeant Noble Sissle, later to become well known on Broadway as a singer, conductor and composer. Europe, who had enough jazz in stock to last until the war was over, played for both American and French troops in camps, in hospitals and for civilians behind the lines and in Paris."<sup>93</sup>

Upon his return to the United States, Europe took selected musicians from the 369th band and from the 350th Field Artillery band and formed a jazz band that was one of the first such groups to tour parts of the United States.

Before entering the service, Europe had conducted syncopated orchestras in New York and had served as musical director of many Broadway shows besides conducting concerts given in Carnegie Hall.

His tours of Europe with his jazz orchestra helped spread jazz around the world.



### Standardization of Jazz

Where ragtime had been rather boisterous, staccato and pianistic, jazz became more suave and melodically more vocal in character. In the jazz idiom, the popular song soon assumed a more important role and phraseology became more sustained and singable. The piano began to lose its domination to instruments that were more closely related to the human voice - the saxophone, trumpet, clarinet and the trombone. Subsequently the instrumentation of the popular dance and entertainment orchestra underwent a minor revolution.

Both, the crude form of the blues, which was also in the developmental stage, and the standardized blues, which will be discussed later, had a great influence on the development of jazz. This peculiar blues modality, with the flatted third and seventh, which had been present in the earlier religious songs, became a standard feature of many jazz tunes, and of practically all jazz accompaniment.

As blues and jazz became more closely related, jazz musicians would often use instrumental phrases to fill in the gaps between the verses of the blues. This is still a common practice.

From its early development, jazz went through its many transitions and the term became more ambiguous, for all forms of popular music soon became termed as jazz.



This included ragtime, blues, dixieland, swing and all other music typed as popular.

As this phase of music became standardized, the songs took on a form. They became either the traditional 12 bar blues or mostly 32 bar songs with 8 bar distinct phrases. In the 32 bar songs, the first 8 bars, the second 8 bars and the last 8 bars were almost identical. The middle 8 bars, called the release, the bridge, or the channel was different, making an A B A song form.

As this form of music became standardized in structure, form, and more 'sophisticated', to some of the devotees of the original jazz the true element was disappearing. Much of the free expression was taken out of the music and the songs took a definite melodic and harmonic pattern. Where jazz had been characterized by individualism, group participation and organization became more prevalent. The groups became larger in number during the swing era (the late 1920's and early 1930's) and the standard jazz dance orchestra usually included four or five saxophones, three or four trumpets, from one to three trombones and the thym section of piano, drums, bass and sometimes guitar.

Through these transitions, the Negro musicians remained among the leaders. As ragtime was gradually dying out, riverboat jazz became popular. Converted



excursion steamers began to leave New Orleans and make passenger carrying voyages up the Mississippi River from such cities as Memphis, Saint Louis, Cairo, Davenport and as far as Saint Paul. Other trips would be on rivers adjoining the Mississippi such as the Ohio, eastward to Pittsburg, and the Missouri, northwest to Kansas City. On these boats many of the leading jazz musicians from New Orleans performed and as they played excursion dances from these river front cities, their jazz began to spread to various sections of the United States, and as the musicians began to stay in these cities, such places as Saint Louis, Memphis and Kansas City became jazz centers. One of the most prominent of the riverboat jazz leaders was Fate Marable, who eventually settled in Saint Louis and became highly acclaimed. (He will be discussed fully in the chapter on Jazz in Saint Louis).

When Chicago became a jazz center, such pioneers as King Oliver, Sidney Bechet and Jimmy Noone were prominent figures.

In the middle 1930's when the swing era was prominent, Fletcher Henderson sparked the Benny Goodman orchestra with his musical arrangements. Bands under the leadership of Chick Webb and later Count Basie were highly acclaimed during the swing era.



### Bebop

As the swing era began to loose its prominence, another form of popular music became popular. It was commonly called be-bop, and seemed more complicated than most of the jazz styles. Some music authorities claimed that because of the complexities of bebop it should not be classified as jazz, but as other forms it was accepted as another phase of jazz. In discussing this factor one writer stated:

"Bebop, a form of music distinct from jazz because its players have abandoned the classic instrumental jazz traditions. Instead of making their instruments sing like the human voice with inflections, vibrato, sustained notes and phrases full of contrast, the beboppers play according to the European instrumental traditions.

Because the bop rhythm section breaks the continuity of the swing, the drummers constantly introduce rhythm which springs from pseudo Spanish figures. In bop music the drums no longer supply the steady beat which gives rhythm to the whole band, but on the contrary, play a kind of solo part, 'throwing bombs' here and there, and the piano does the same.

Boppers systematically use chords and intervals adapted from modern European music and destroy the harmonic atmosphere of jazz."<sup>93</sup>

Another writer in discussing this phase of music states:

"Around 1940 a group of Negro musicians in Harlem, New York began an elaboration of the jazz language which came to be known as bebop (syllables suggested by certain



and Miles abrupt rhythmic accents in the music). The general characteristics of this jazz were an enriched harmonic vocabulary, sometimes reaching the polytonality and atonality; a prolific use of flatted fifths, passing notes and passing chords; complicated melodic patterns often of markedly irregular phrase lengths; and highly eccentric rhythms frequently drawing on Carribbean sources.

Bebop ran into many cliches, but its most creative players were extraordinary musicians. They animated a new generation of jazz players who in the 1950's showed a great deal of subtle brilliance in improvisation and a steady development in the art of distinctive composition for jazz band. Significantly, many of these men were students of formal musical theory."<sup>94</sup>

This newer form of jazz, set a new standard for the music world, and brought a newer style of jazz to the ear of the public, probably the greatest change since the development of jazz. This music was less danceable than swing, and to some less listenable. Because of these factors, the general public was reluctant in accepting bebop, for to the average laymen and some musicians it was not understood, and it is a fact that the public is hesitant in accepting music that is too different from what they have been used to hearing.

Among the leaders of the bebop era were John Birks, (Dizzy Gillespie, still considered one of the best of the modern trumpet players, the late Charlie Parker, one of the greatest exponents of the alto sax, and one of the most imitated jazz musicians, Theolonius Monk, pianist



and Miles Davis, trumpet performer from East Saint Louis, Illinois.

In discussing this phase of popular music and its exponents, it was stated in the July-August, 1951 issue of the 'The Record Changer':

"Charlie Parker came out of Kansas City; Dizzy Gillespie came out of Cab Calloway's band; Theolonius Monk, that mysterious and rather mystical fellow, had apparently always been playing that way. Subsequently it turned out that some of them had gotten together at Minton's in Harlem, at the tag-end of the 'Thirties', but the first that the world knew about 'bebop' or 'rebop' was when it burst full bloom upon 52nd street in the early years of World War II.

It made a very big splash, and it appeared to have stirred up an unduly large crop of writers interested in explaining its deeper significances. It was described as a music of Negro protest, as the inevitable new direction of jazz, as the jazz equivalent of Stravinsky and/or Debussy, as 'progressive' (which meant that New Orleans jazz was 'reactionary'.)

Whatever the significances, it was an intricate and basically honest music that attracted just about all the younger Negro musicians and many whites"<sup>95</sup>

An orchestra under the leadership of John Birks, 'Dizzy' Gillespie was sent in 1956 on a tour of the mid eastern countries and South America under the sponsorship of the State Department and the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA). As Dizzy stated:

"These tours were part of a general cultural export program which ANTA and the State had



developed. The idea, of course, was to create friends for the United States. I really believe that we did our little bit to help."<sup>96</sup>

Among the many mid-eastern locations visited were Karachi, Pakistan, Abadan Iran, Bengal, Damascus, Aleppo, Ankara, Istanbul and Belgrade. As a result of the success of this tour, modern jazz, the follow-up of bebop, has spread throughout the world. It has been stated that this tour of jazz musicians was used as a gesture of goodwill and fellowship, and apparently did as much or more for better international relationship as many tours of various ambassadors and foreign ministers.

In speaking of jazz, Dizzy Gillespie stated:

"Jazz is a kind of meeting place where one man can tell what another does even if they speak different languages. The experts tell me that jazz music is a 'common denominator', a medium of universal appeal. They call it an 'expression of deep-seated emotion'. Well, maybe I wouldn't say it that way, but I sure do agree with them. And that's the reason jazz is so popular all over the world. It gives the musician a chance to say something in his own special way, and the audience can understand him without explanation or study. There is a kind of directness with no middle man in between the artist and his public."<sup>97</sup>

Gillespie spoke further concerning his tours:

"I have been doing a lot of musing on why our recent overseas tours (first to the Middle East, then to South America) were such smashes. And I believe that it is because there is something universal about our music."<sup>98</sup>



### Modern or Progressive Jazz

Following the bebop era, came what is now termed the modern or progressive jazz era, which is the current trend. This style of jazz, as most of the others, was named by some individuals for commercial purposes. Characteristically the music is not as 'far out' as bebop, musically speaking, and in many ways more subtle. Using the principles of bebop, swing, classical influences and forms, modern jazz also sometimes employs triple meter time signatures, something not too familiar in the jazz idiom.

Differing from the earlier forms of jazz, the leading exponents of modern jazz are relatively learned musicians, because the complexities of the music calls for experienced and musically educated performers.

During this era of jazz, many Negro arrangers and composers keeping abreast with the modern musical trend, have exploited this phase of popular music and their compositions and arrangements have taken on many of the aspects of symphonic music. The use of the flute, bassoon, bass horn, French horn, oboe and other such instruments not before too familiar in the field of jazz, has become common. Jazz suites and compositions in various movements are becoming a part of the repertory of many of the modern jazz orchestras.



Among the leading arrangers and composers in the modern jazz phase of music are George Russell, Ernie Wilkins and Quincy Jones.

### George Russell

George Russell, a former drummer in the Wilberforce Collegians, while I was pianist in this dance orchestra at Wilberforce University, has developed what he considers a new approach in jazz composing and arranging. He did research and extensive study for a period of ten years to develop this music theory. Russell terms this approach as the 'Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization'.

In an article which appeared in the Downbeat Magazine, Russell elaborates on jazz musicians:

"The jazz musician has a natural aversion to having a concept on theory imposed on him due, among other things to the awkward struggle he has encountered in shaping the traditional European explanation of tonality to fit the needs of jazz.

The jazz musician, to some degree has had to learn traditional music theory only to break many of its rules in practice. Other theories have come along, but the jazz musician has made only a fractional use, if any, of them. Perhaps because they weren't a natural evolvement from the chord basis that underlies jazz and all traditional Western music.

A theory of any kind demands obedience at first in order to master it. However, a really useful theory doesn't enslave one without making the period of servitude



interesting and worthwhile and without eventually freeing its subscribers through its own built-in liberation apparatus.

The theory which forces you to rebel against its concepts in order to find freedom is obviously not fulfilling the needs required of it."<sup>99</sup>

Russell, a former student of Stefan Wolpe, is preparing a correspondence course teaching his musical concept. He is currently teaching this musical theory to some of the leading jazz musicians in New York. He feels that after ten lessons, a musician will be able to improvise according to his theory.

In 1957, Russell was invited to lecture on the Lydian Concept at the School of Jazz held in Lenox, Massachusetts and served in the same capacity in the summer of 1958. He also appeared on the nationally televised program 'The Subject is Jazz' which was shown in the Saint Louis area on Saturday, June 28, 1958. He discussed his approach to modern jazz.

As has been the case in other forms of jazz, Negro musicians are among the leaders. Among these leaders are included Max Roach, considered by many as one of the top drummers, Art Blakey, drums, Donald Byrd, trumpet, John Coltrane, tenor sax, Horace Silver, pianist and the late Clifford Brown. Holdovers from the bebop era are Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis and Sonny Stith, sax.



## The Blues

The blues previously mentioned were mostly the crude folk song of the early Negroes having been developed from spirituals, work songs, and other social songs. This folk song had achieved sufficient status by 1910 to be recognized as a standard form of popular music with definite characteristics.

The blues were developed by southern Negroes, bar-room pianists, street corner guitar players, wandering laborers, watchers of incoming trains and steamboats, prostitutes and outcasts.

### Construction of the Early Blues

The early unwritten blues were so simply constructed that a singer who wished to accompany himself needed only to know three chords: the common chords of the tonic, sub-dominant and the dominant seventh. Many of the blues of today, have the same simple progressions.

### Essential Element of the Blues

The essential element of the blues singers was the individuals' own personality. The singers deal with their own personality and their own troubles, desires, resentments, and their own opinions of life and people. Most of the blues are songs of melancholy but there are blues that have a happy element.



### Style of the Blues

As the blues were developed, the traditional three line verse style emerged, which still characterizes these songs. The first two lines are the same, and the third line, commonly called the 'punch line' concludes the thought of the verse e.g.

'Sent for you yesterday, here you come today,  
Sent for you yesterday, here you come today,  
You can't love me baby and treat me that-a-way.'

As the blues became three line verses, these songs differed from the other standard songs which contained two or four line verses, and thus the music of the blues fell into a twelve bar pattern instead of the usual eight or sixteen bar pattern.

### Structure of the Blues

The harmonic structure of the blues is very simple, and mostly contains the I, IV and V chords. Interesting to note is the flatted 7th employed almost exclusively with the IV chord. A typical chordal construction of the blues is:

- I chord for 1 bar
- IV chord for 1 bar (with flatted 7th)
- I chord for 1 bar
- I chord with the flatted 7th for 1 bar
- IV chord with the flatted 7th for 2 bars
- I chord for 2 bars
- V chord with dominant 7th for 2 bars
- I chord for 2 bars



### Value of the Blues

The value of the blues to the music of America, as were the other folk songs of the Negro, was not realized at first, and the credit is given to the late W.C. Handy, called the 'Father of the Blues', for its development into a standard form of popular music. As written by Abbe Niles:

"It was W. C. Handy who first appreciated the universal appeal of the Negro blues, and who introduced into American popular music the qualities of these folk songs. Recognition of the value of the blues resulted in a fundamental change in the character of the popular music of America."<sup>100</sup>

From these songs of the Negroes played in the bar-rooms and such places, the blues have developed into a form of music performed now in modified form in concert halls, on radio and television, in the movies and on recordings. The blues idiom is very prevalent in the works of many leading American composers including George Gershwin, whose 'Rhapsody in Blue' brought a new era to the blues, as well as Roy Harris, Aaron Copland and Burrill Phillips.

There have been many vocal and instrumental artists who have made outstanding contributions to the success and popularity of the blues. Pine Top Smith and Jelly Roll Morton have long been considered among the top blues and boogie woogie pianists. Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey were early blues singers who toured the country and



popularized the blues. 101

Joe Turner, Joe Williams and Dinah Washington are among the present day blues singers who are very popular.

Currently the blues have 'taken on a new life' in the music circles of the country. For commercial purposes, the terms 'rock and roll', and 'rhythm and blues' have been given to a modified form of the blues. Although this type of music is of little interest to the writer, artists performing this type of music have become leading recording stars. Both white and Negro musicians and singers have turned to some form of blues for their livelihood. Record companies have been recording leading artists featuring blues tunes.

### Boogie Woogie

Another form of popular music made famous by Negro performers was boogie-woogie, another term given a style of popular music with no technical definition of the word itself.

Boogie Woogie tunes and the standardized blues are alike in that both are built primarily on twelve bar themes with identical harmonic structure involving the tonic, sub-dominant and the dominant. The principle difference between boogie woogie and the blues is the style of bass used. The eight to the bar ostinato



bass style characterizes boogie woogie.

Another difference between the blues and boogie woogie is that the rhythm predominates in boogie woogie, with the melody being secondary while in the blues the melody is the more important factor.

A name closely associated with boogie woogie is that of the late Clarence (Pinetop) Smith, an Alabama born Negro, who came to Chicago during the summer of 1928. Later that year he made the recording of his composition 'Pinetop's Boogie Woogie' which was a great factor in popularizing this style of music.

While Smith was the creator of this composition, he is not credited with creating the boogie woogie style. A song writer, Richard M. Jones, recalls a Negro named Stavin Chain, who played boogie woogie in cheap dance halls in and around Donaldsville, at Bayou La Fouché, Louisiana, while workmen were busy constructing the Texas and Pacific railroad in 1904.<sup>102</sup>

Jelly Roll Morton, noted Negro pianist and composer, remembers hearing the boogie style many times as a child. It has been reported, and recalled that at that time it was known as 'honky tonk'.

"Tony Catalano, prominent white trumpet player and veteran of 23 seasons on Mississippi River boats, once stated that he heard the boogie in New Orleans when he first visited that city in 1907. During the early years of Tony's career on the boats he employed many colored pianists including Charlie Mills and Fate Marable.



Bunny Good He explained, 'It was hard to keep white piano players on the job, and they didn't like the idea of getting wet from the steam it expelled. This didn't bother the colored musicians for with it came the opportunity to travel and earn, what was to them, big money. This was one of the ways in which Negro music moved northward.'<sup>103</sup>

With continued performances of piano players such as Pinetop Smith, Fate Marable and other Negro musicians, the boogie woogie style of piano playing had its day in the field of popular music.

More recent exponents of the boogie woogie style of piano who achieved acclaim include Albert Ammons, Meade Lux Lewis, and Pete Johnson, who eventually formed what was known as the 'Boogie Woogie Trio'. This trio was formed on the night of December 23, 1938.

"These three men had journeyed to New York to take part in a concert of Negro music sponsored by the 'New Masses' magazine and John Hammons, young New York music patron, writer and critic. Lewis, Ammons and Johnson each in turn played their variations of boogie woogie individually. Then as a climax, three grand pianos were pushed on the stage, and music history was made when the boys played boogie woogie collectively on three keyboards. This stunt was so successful that it was repeated a few days later at the Brunswick Recording Studios. The results of this three decker can be heard on Vocalion Record No. 4606. It is called 'Boogie Woogie Prayer' and is in two parts."<sup>104</sup>

This group played concerts in various cities in the United States. During engagement at Cafe Society in New York, Lewis and Ammons made guest appearances on



Benny Goodman's 'Camel Caravan' and on the Columbia Broadcasting System's, 'Saturday Night Swing Club'. Johnson was a guest on 'We, the People', radio program and Columbia's 'Saturday Night Dance Hour'. After a successful run of nine months at Cafe Society, the trio played an engagement at the Panther Room in the Sherman Hotel where they worked for two months before returning to New York.

#### The Negro in Musical Comedy

While the blues, ragtime and jazz were becoming standard forms of popular music, and many Negro musicians were using these styles as a medium for achieving financial success along with a degree of national and international acclaim, there were some participating in other phases of popular music and succeeding as composers, directors, and performers.

There has been previous mention of Negroes who had succeeded as concert singers, serious composers, and solo artists, the same pattern followed in popular music. Negro musicians and performers became associated with the various phases of popular music, and such individuals as Bert Williams, Florence Mills, Abbie Mitchell, Will Marion Cook, J. Rosamond Johnson, Robert 'Bob' Cole, Luckey Roberts, Adelaide Hall, James P. Johnson, Ethel Waters and Juanita Hall have gained recognition and



acceptance for their achievements in musical shows.

Some were composers and others were performers.

From the earlier days of the musical comedies, there were Negro performers and composers. Ernest Logan and Sam Lucas were among the early dancers. There were others who appeared in such shows as S.H. Dudley's 'Smart Set', which dates back to 1896, Ernest Hogan's 'Rufus Rastus' in 1890, and shows of Cole and Johnson and Williams and Walker which were performed in 1899.<sup>105</sup>

Bert Williams and his partner George Walker, were among the most popular comedians of the early 20th century. This act performed on Broadway for nine years dating from 1899 in productions which featured music written by Will Marion Cook, considered by many as one of the leading composers in this musical vein.<sup>106</sup>

Among other composers for musical shows were James J. Vaughn, who was musical director for Williams and Walker shows for eight years; Will Vodery, musical director for many of the 'Smart Set' shows; Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle, who were responsible for many of the 'Shuffle Along' shows; James P. Johnson, who wrote the music for the show 'Running Wild'; and Andy Razaf, who along with his many other musical works, collaborated with 'Fats Waller' in writing the music for the show 'Hot Chocolates'.

Charles (Luckey) Roberts was musical director for many shows. He and his partner Alex Rogers were the



first Negro team to write entirely white shows that had extended runs on Broadway. They wrote 'Go, Go', and 'Charlee' for John Cort. They also wrote Nora Bayes' vaudeville act and for Moran and Mack's radio programs. Through Will Marion Cook, Roberts met Florenz (the Great) Ziegfield, for whom he and Rogers wrote the finale for 'Midnight Frolic Glide'.

Roberts was also an accomplished pianist and teacher. Among his most prominent piano pupils were George Gershwin, Duke Ellington, Earl Hines, Fats Waller, all well known musicians, and such socialites as Doris Duke, Alfred Vanderbilt and Dorothy Norman.<sup>107</sup> Among his most popular compositions was 'Moonlight Cocktails' which was featured and recorded by the band under the leadership of the late Glenn Miller.

Robert (Bob) Cole was another of the earlier composers and performers on the stage. It has been said that Cole was one of the most talented and versatile performers connected with the stage. He could write a play, stage it, write the music and play a part. Cole formed a partnership with the Johnson brothers, James Weldon and J. Rosamond. This team was formed to produce songs and plays. Rosamond Johnson and Cole gained their wide spread recognition as a vaudeville team, Cole and Johnson. They used original songs written by the trio and



performed coast to coast in American and in European countries.

It is commonly known in music circles that many songs have been written and either sold for practically nothing, stolen from the original composer, or given away. One of these songs was 'Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider'. According to Ida Blueford Ramsey, this song was written by Bob Cole to show his admiration for her, and was sold to Eddie Leonard. Eddie Cantor popularized this song.<sup>108</sup>

Besides the work he did with Bob Cole, J. Rosamond Johnson composed many other worthy musical works. He set music to many lyrics written by his brother James Weldon. J. Rosamond also wrote songs which were featured by such performers as May Irvin, Lillian Russell and Anna Held. The Johnson brothers added to their popularity by their many adaptations of Negro spirituals. J. Rosamond also wrote a book entitled 'Rolling Along in Song' which was a Chronological Survey of American Negro Music. This book was published in 1937 by the Viking Press in New York. One of the most popular works of the Johnson Brothers was the composition 'Lift Every Voice and Sing', termed in some circles as the 'Negro National Anthem', in which the plight of the American Negro is depicted. Besides his accomplishments as a composer and writer, J. Rosamond Johnson appeared as performer in such



productions as 'Porgy and Bess' and 'Cabin in the Sky'.

Another popular performer during this era was Abbie Mithcell. She received her first voice lessons from Harry T. Burleigh, who suggested she continue vocal training with Mme. Emilia Serrano with whom she studied for four years. Miss Mitchell gained much stage experience and success in the musical comedies of Will Marion Cook whom she married at the age of 14. In spite of this unquestioned success in this phase of music, she retired from musical shows and began to prepare herself for the concert stage as a dramatic soprano. She studied music theory and harmony with Melville Charlton in New York and later went to Paris where she studied with Jean de Roszke for two years. She was presented in concert in many major cities in Europe and in her repertory were featured German songs. Following a nervous breakdown, Miss Mitchell practically lost her singing voice. To stay in show business, she turned to the dramatic stage and became one of the leading actresses with the Lafayette Players Stock Company in New York. She has appeared in such stage plays as 'Madame X', 'Help Wanted', and 'The Little Foxes' in which Bette Davis was the featured performer. She is now retired from the stage and is living in New York. Her son, Dr. Mercer Cook, is a professor of Romance Languages at Howard University in Washington, D.C.<sup>109</sup>



Among other performers in musical shows were Florence Mills, who appeared in many of the 'Shuffle Along' shows; Adelaide Hall and Ada Ward, who appeared in productions of Lew Leslie's 'Blackbirds'; Ethel Waters, a long time stage, screen and radio personality; Etta Moten, Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson; and St. Louis' Josephine Baker.

Another of the noted composers of popular songs was James Bland who wrote two all time American favorites, 'Carry Me Back to Ole Virginny' and 'In the Evening by the Moonlight'.

It seems that during the days of the minstrel shows and when the Negro was stereotyped as a comic character, more opportunities were afforded him for performances on the stage. Now since the mass of the Negroes resent being so typed, there are few opportunities for stardom on the stage unless he is portrayed as a domestic servant or a comedian of the Stepin Fetchit or Willie Best type. He has been in demand more for the comic aspect than for dramatic ability.

Sammy Davis Jr. has won distinction for having a Broadway show written for and about him, 'Mr. Wonderful'. In this show he was the star and appeared on stage along with white and Negro actors, musicians and singers of note.

Juanita Hall, who played the role of 'Bloody Mary' in the Broadway production of South Pacific is



another of the present day Negro performers who has attained some recognition on the stage in musical shows.

For more recent achievements, Luther Henderson has the distinction of being the first Negro musical director for a nationally televised show. He served in this capacity when the Polly Bergen show made its debut in the Fall of 1957 and he made his personal television debut with this show.

#### Dance Orchestra Leaders and Outstanding Dance Musicians

As the dance orchestras became popular in America and around the world, many Negro musicians became prominent as orchestra leaders, stylists, soloists (instrumental and vocal), composers and as 'section men'.<sup>110</sup> Some made definite contributions towards the further development of this phase of popular music.

One of the early orchestra leaders was Fletcher Henderson, whose reputation as a leader, pianist and arranger spread all over the country. Many present day leaders were at one time in one of the many groups formed by him.

From the Henderson group came such performers as Roy Eldridge who is yet considered one of the best trumpet players. Roy Eldridge, after leaving the Henderson orchestra was featured for many years with the Gene Krupa orchestra, and lately seems to be a fixed feature with the Norman Granz attraction 'Jazz at the Philharmonic'. Other



present day jazz favorites that were featured by Fletcher Henderson include Don Redman, arranger and leader; Coleman Hawkins, termed as the 'Dean of the tenor sax players', Buster Bailey, clarinet artist, Rex Stewart, trumpet stylist, also featured with the Duke Ellington orchestra and currently a performer in Paris, France; Benny Carter, instrumental artist and arranger; Red Allen, another of the leading jazz trumpet players and Kaiser Marshall, drummer, who is credited as being the first drummer to use the now accepted high hat cymbal.

Other leaders include Speed Webb, from whose orchestra came such stylists as Teddy Wilson, pianist featured for many years with the Benny Goodman musical group, and currently a favorite as a soloist and leader.

The orchestra under the leadership of Chick Webb, was another favorite during the swing era. The late Chick Webb, is still considered to have been one of the better swing drummers, and his orchestra gave Benny Goodman and his group probably the greatest competition in the field of swing. Featured with the Chick Webb group were such individuals as Ella Fitzgerald, one of the present day vocal stars, Louis Jordan, another of the top performers and Hilton Jefferson considered by many as one of the leading first alto stylists.

The orchestra under the leadership of Andy Kirk was an attraction in the late 1930's and early 1940's.



Featured with this group were such musicians as Mary Lou Williams, one of the leading female jazz pianists, Benjamin Thigpen, drummer, and Floyd Smith, whose recording of 'Floyd's Guitar Blues' helped popularize the electric guitar as a solo instrument in jazz. Featured vocalist of the Andy Kirk orchestra was the late Pha Terrell, who was one of the first male vocalists to achieve national prominence as featured vocalist with a name orchestra. His recording with the Kirk group of 'Until the Real Thing Comes Along' was a big hit.

Edward Kennedy 'Duke' Ellington has established himself through the years as a leading figure in the popular music field as a dance orchestra leader. Ellington recently celebrated his 27th anniversary as an orchestra leader. Among the recognized musicians that have been featured with his orchestra are Johnny Hodges, alto sax stylist, Cootie Williams, who developed the growl and plunger style of trumpet playing, following the style set earlier by Bubber Miles, also a former member of the Ellington group, the late Jimmy Blanton, who is credited in exploiting the use of the bass viol as a solo instrument in jazz, Juan Tizol, trombone stylist and composer, and Oscar Pettiford, bass viol player who popularized the cello as a solo instrument in the field of jazz. Duke Ellington is one of the most renowned composers of popular music. Among



his many compositions are 'Sophisticated Lady', 'Mood Indigo', 'I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart', 'Solitude', 'Take the A Train', 'Black and Tan Fantasy', and 'In a Sentimental Mood'. Among his more serious works are the 'Black Brown and Beige Suite', a tone poem depicting Negro life, and the 'Perfume Suite'. Ellington also has the distinction of having a major television program, the U. S. Steel Hour, devote an entire program to one of his works 'A Drum is a Woman'.

Another leader in the field of popular music is William 'Count' Basie who has celebrated his twentieth year as an orchestra leader. Among the musicians featured with his orchestra are Lester Young, called 'Prez', short version of president, as he has been labeled the president of the tenor players. He has been a tremendous influence on many of the present day tenor sax stars. Others include Joe Jones, Drums, Buck Clayton, and Harry Edison, trumpet, players, Tab Smith, also sax stylist now residing in St. Louis, and currently a recording favorite, and Ernest 'Ernie' Wilkins another St. Louisan, whose arrangements had much to do with the current success of the Count Basie orchestra. The recent European tours of the Basie group have brought favorable comments from European critics and the public.

In the late 1930's and early 1940's the orchestra under the leadership of Jimmy Lunceford was considered



as one of the best. The band set a style of two beat jazz that typed the band. The bands of the late Tommy Dorsey, Billy May and Hal McIntyre have been somewhat patterned from the Lunceford orchestra. Musicians such as Billy Smith, alto sax stylist, Trummie Young, trombonist, Edwin Wilcox, and James Crawford, drummer, who was a member of the band in the Broadway production 'Mr. Wonderful' were prominent members of this orchestra.

Benny Carter, of Los Angeles, is an outstanding performer on various instruments, his major one being the alto sax, and is one of the leading arrangers on the west coast. His arrangements have been featured in movies. He was featured as a playing musician in the film 'The Snows of Kilimanjaro'.

Besides the performers previously mentioned, there have been many other Negro musicians who have been acclaimed for their artistry and achievement in the popular music field. Some have emerged as leading performers on their particular instrument, others have become leading vocalists. Many of these have set new standards in this phase of music that have merited them international recognition.

For many years the name of the late Art Tatum, has headed the list of outstanding piano virtuosos in the field of jazz. Many music authorities have placed him in a class all by himself because of his artistry. The handicap of being blind did not hamper his performances at the



pianoforte. At the time of his death on November 5th, 1956, Art Tatum was considered by many as one of the greatest exponents of interpretive piano in his field. His death was mourned by music lovers all over the world. There were many news articles heralding Art Tatum after his untimely death. In the following he was eulogized by some of his fellow musicians:

"Many people considered Art Tatum the greatest living pianist. While he was alive this used to embarrass him. 'That is an awful lot to live up to', he would say. Now that he has gone, many more people are saying with more conviction than ever before that he was in truth the greatest pianist. Because now they don't have to face his embarrassment.

Duke Ellington was tremendously saddened by his death. 'I've always maintained that he was the greatest pianist of them all. Fortunately his artistry and musicianship are on record for all the world to hear. And the world will acknowledge that he was the greatest', stated Ellington.

Composer, arranger Phil Moore considered Tatum a genius. He stated, 'Now everyone will recognize him as the genius he has always been. The public will start to realize that this man was the greatest pianist, technically and harmoniously, of all time. He was also the greatest improviser of our time'. Moore termed Tatum's style 'pure piano'.

Pianist, Bobby Short, whose European triumphs are being echoed here, felt that Tatum had the 'most pronounced effect on jazz pianists than anyone in the world. He was probably the first jazz musician who made long hair musicians sit up and take notice'.

Besides a popular notion that Tatum played 'by ear' he was a stormy advocate of accuracy



in musicianship and he spoke regretfully of musicians who did not read scores. He himself started violin lessons at an early age in Toledo, Ohio and consequently switched to piano.

Highly regarded by classical pianists, Tatum, too, had a healthy respect for them. He used to say that his favorite classical pianists were 'Horowitz!', 'Horowitz!', and 'Horowitz!'.

Count Basie said of Art Tatum; 'They can bury the piano now. No one to play it'.

Other music leaders include Earl Hines, piano and band leader, from whose groups emerged such vocal stars as Johnny Hartman, Billy Eckstein, Arthur Lee Simpkins and Sara Vaughn.

The late Fats Waller, called the 'clown of the piano', whose vocal and piano stylings were a nationally wide favorite, is another of these artists whose name has gone down in the history of jazz.

The late 'Hot Lips' Page, who was one of the first Negro musicians to be featured with a leading white orchestra, was one of the leading trumpet stars for years. Oscar Peterson, Erroll Garner, Don Shirley, Billy Taylor, and Phineas Newborn, Jr., are among the present day piano stylists whose standout performances have brought them national and international acclaim.

Among the artists prominent in the modern jazz vein should be included: Bud Powell, Pianist, drummers Kenny Clark and Roy Hayne,



bassists: Ray Brown, Charles Mingus, Paul Chambers and Red Callender, J.J. Johnson, trombonist, and Sonny Rollins, sax star.

The majority of the musicians mentioned in this chapter have appeared in Saint Louis through the years, and have tremendously influenced the musical movement among the Negroes of this city. The music of the Negro in Saint Louis cannot be considered apart from the national scene.

Being centrally located geographically has been a factor in Saint Louis becoming a music center as well as an industrial center.

Negro Musicians and Their Music  
P. 62. Associated Publishers, Inc., Washington,  
D.C., 1938

6. Fischer, Milo M.

Slave Songs in the United States  
P. 2

6. Woodson Carter G. (Editor)

Negro History Bulletin, Vol. 11, No. 5 Feb. 1939  
P. 34. Published monthly by the Association of  
Negro Life and History, Washington, D.C.

(This information from editorial entitled: 'Negro  
History Week to Feature Musicians and their Music')

7. Marian Anderson signed by the Metropolitan Opera  
Company in the fall of 1935 to sing the role of  
the gypsy fortune teller Ulrica in their production  
of Verdi's 'The Unhatched Ball' during this season, was  
the first Negro singer to be signed by this company.



## FOOTNOTES for CHAPTER I

1. Brawley, Benjamin

A Short History of the American Negro  
P. 1, The MacMillan Company, New York, 1945

2. Woodson, Carter G.,

The Negro in Our History  
P. 69, Associated Publishers, Inc.  
Washington, D.C., Sixth Edition, 1922.

3. Fischer, Miles Mark

Negro Slaves Songs in the United States  
P. 14, Cornell University Press, Ithaca  
New York, 1933

(This book is Fischer's complete rewriting of his doctoral thesis written while attending the University of Chicago. Thesis submitted in 1945. Original title of thesis: 'The Evolution of Slave Songs in the United States.'

4. Hare, Maud Cuney

Negro Musicians and Their Music  
P. 62, Associated Publishers Inc., Washington,  
D.C., 1936

5. Fischer, Mile M.

Slave Songs in the United States  
P. 5

6. Woodson Carter G. (Editor)

Negro History Bulletin Vol. III, No. 5 Feb. 1939  
P. 34, Published monthly by the Association of  
Negro Life and History, Washington, D.C.

(This information from editorial entitled: 'Negro History Week to Feature Musicians and their Music!')

7. Marian Anderson signed by the Metropolitan Opera Company in the Fall of 1954 to sing the role of the gypsy fortune teller Ulrica in their production of Verdi's 'The Masked Ball' during this season, was the first Negro singer to be signed by this company.



8. Negro History Bulletin, February 1939 edition  
p. 34
9. The article appeared in the April 4th, 1953  
edition of the Pittsburg Courier, one of the  
leading Negro weekly newspapers.
10. Negro History Bulletin, February 1939 edition  
p. 35.
11. Negro History Bulletin, February 1939 edition  
p. 35
12. Work, John W.  
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13. Pack, Louis H.  
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14. Apel, Willi  
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P. 481, Harvard University Press, Cambridge,  
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15. Johnson, J. Rosamond  
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P. 9, Viking Press, New York City, 1937  
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16. Negro History Bulletin, Vol. II, No. 5, February  
1939. Published monthly by the Association of  
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'Negro History Week to Feature Musicians and Their  
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17. Odum and Johnson  
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P. 14, University of North Carolina Press, 1925
18. Odum and Johnson  
The Negro and His Songs  
P. 15, University of North Carolina Press, 1925



19. Howard, John Tasker  
Our American Music  
 P. 416 Thomas Y. Cromwell Company, New York City  
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20. Krehbiel, Howard E.  
Afro-American Folksongs  
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 P. 30, G. Schirmer Company, New York City, 1914
22. White, Newman, PH.D.  
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 Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts  
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23. Ibid, P. 34
24. Ibid, P. 32
25. Article written on 'Negro Music' by R. Nathaniel Dett which appears on page 1243 of International Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians. Edited by Oscar Thompson, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York 1946.
26. Negro History Bulletin Vol. II, No. 5, Feb. 1939  
 edition. P. 34
27. Work, John W.  
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 Fisk University Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1915.
28. Ibid.
29. In Africa, the Negro had many songs and stories about animals. The early Negro in America retained this African interest in animals, and substituted the possum, the rabbit, the terrapin and other animals close to the plantation for the animals associated with Africa. From these songs many of the Uncle Remus songs arose.



30. Numerous secular interpretations replaced the serious interpretations of the religious songs.
31. Johnson, J. Rosamond  
Rolling Along in Song  
P. 11, Viking Press, New York City, 1939
32. In the Picture Emperor Jones, Paul Robeson sang a version of John Henry.
33. The article appeared in the November 9, 1956 edition of the Saint Louis Artus, weekly Negro newspaper. Article: 'Is Rock and Roll Too Much Like Religion'. (A news syndicate release)
34. Negro History Bulletin, February 1939 edition  
p. 34
35. Ibid
36. Davis, Elizabeth Lindsey  
Lifting as They Climb  
Publisher: National Association of Colored Women  
Washington, D.C., 1933  
  
(History of the National Association of Colored Women)
37. Negro composers of jazz and other popular music are excluded in this section as jazz will be discussed separately.
38. Trotter, James, M.  
Music and Some Highly Musical People  
P. 343, Charles T. Dillingham, New York City, 1879
39. Music examples of Basil Beres and Samuel Snaer will be found in Appendix I
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Our Contemporary Composers  
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41. Ibid,



42. Ibid,
43. This was a great honor bestowed upon Howard Swanson since European works were voted upon on this occasion, whereas, in the past the awards had been limited to American Composers only. Among its rivals for the award were Honneger's 'Fifth Symphony', and William Schuman's 'Sixth Symphony', as well as works by Copeland, Creston and Peter Mennin. Notes from Vanguard Record V.RS 423, Vanguard Recording Company, New York City
44. Information from American Composers Alliance Bulletin, Vol. VII, No. 1, Fall, 1957, New York City
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53. Ibid, pg. 201
54. Ibid, pg. 203



55. Ibid, P. 203
56. Ibid, P. 204
57. Ibid, P. 223
58. Ibid, P. 230
59. Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol.IV  
St. Martins Press, London, MacMillan and Company  
Ltd. New York, 1957.
60. Ibid
61. Ibid, pg. 190
62. Time Magazine, October 18, 1954 edition
63. Time Magazine, January 31, 1955 edition  
Article: 'TV Tosca'
64. Pittsburg Courier, November 17, 1956  
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65. One of the musical works of Justin Holland will  
be found in Appendix II
66. Not to be confused with Tommy Dorsey, Orchestra  
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67. Hughes, Langston  
Miltzer, Milton  
A Pictorial of the Negro in America, 1956 issue  
P. 37, Crown Publishers, New York City, New York
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69. Tone, August 1951 issue (the official organ of the  
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69. Leonard, William (from the Chicago Tribune Press Service)  
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70. Information obtained from Myrtle Crump, former  
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71. Ibid.
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76. Thompson, Kay  
The Recorder Changer (Jazz magazine) October, 1949  
Article: "More on Ragtime". Changer Publications Incorporated, New York City, New York
77. Ibid.
78. Woodward, Woody  
Jazz Americana  
P. 10, Pacific Press Inc. Los Angeles, California
79. Ibid.
80. The International Cylopedia of Music and Musicians
81. Blesch, Rudi  
Shining Trumpets  
Alfred Knopf, New York City, New York, 1946
82. Blom, Eric, Editor  
Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians Vol. IV  
McMillan and Company, London, St. Martins Press, 1954
83. Ibid



84. Ibid.
85. Ibid
86. Article entitled 'Jazz' (a definition as written by Wilder Hobson for the 1956 Encyclopedia Britannica) appeared in the Souvenir Program for the Second Annual Jazz Festival held in Newport, Rhode Island. This jazz festival yearly featured the most prominent jazz artists and during the activities which lasts for at least three days, forums, panels and jazz demonstrations are held featuring leaders in this phase of music, acting as instructors and panelists. This is a non-profit project sponsored by music lovers, jazz authorities and jazz enthusiasts.
87. Ibid.
88. Blesch, Rudi  
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94. Hobson, Wilder, Op.Cit. Footnote 86
95. This article entitled "The New Sound" appeared in the July-August 1951 issue of THE RECORD CHANGER Vol.10, No. 7 and 8 published monthly by Changer Publications, Inc. New York City



96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Cerulli, Dom  
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Article: "George Russell"  
Published in Chicago, Illinois
100. Handy, W.D. Editor (Historical text by Abbe Niles)  
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P. 9, Charles Boni Publishing Company, New York  
City, 1949
101. For a full account of Bessie Smith, considered by  
many as the greatest of the blues singers, see  
Appendix IV.
102. Pease, Sharon  
Boogie Woogie Piano Styles P. 10  
The history, development and art of playing the  
boogie woogie style. Published by Forster Music  
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103. Ibid, P. 11
104. Ibid, P. 13
105. Handy, W. C.  
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the guest appearance of Charles (Luckey) Roberts  
at the assembly of Wednesday, July 15, 1953.
108. Ida Blueford Ramsey, currently residing in New  
York appeared in musical shows with music written  
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109. Hare, Maud Cuney

Negro Musicians and Their Music

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110. When the personnel of the dance orchestras became standardized into reed, brass and rhythm sections, individuals that excelled in tone quality, phrasing and interpretation were considered valuable to the success of the group.

111. Cunningham, Evelyn

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## CHAPTER II

### THE NEGRO IN MUSIC IN SAINT LOUIS - BEFORE 1900-1910

#### The Period of the Pioneers (Influence of the Church)

##### Before 1900

##### Founding of Saint Louis

Saint Louis, named after Louis IX, patron saint of the then ruling Louis XV, was founded in 1746 by a group of fur trading Frenchmen led by Pierre Laclède Liguette. Located originally where it would serve as the logical trading post with Indians of the Mississippi River systems, convenient to the Illinois and Ohio Rivers, it grew to become a great metropolis.<sup>1</sup>

The name Missouri was derived from the Missouri Indians who settled in Saint Louis during the period of early French domination. This tribe of Indians did much to help the Frenchmen develop the new settlement.

Saint Louis was under the rule of the French until 1774 when the Spaniards assumed control which lasted for more than 30 years.

One of the most important periods of the history of Saint Louis was when the land west of the Mississippi River became a part of the United States in 1803. In October 1800, Spain gave the Louisiana Territory back to France, Saint Louis included, but it was not until 1802 that the King of Spain gave orders to his officers to deliver the land to France. Napoleon was then the ruler of France.



"He was so busy with his wars at home, that he had little time for the new country. Besides, he was in need of money."<sup>2</sup>

The President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, sent a representative to France to confer on buying the city at the mouth of the Mississippi, New Orleans. The people of the United States were greatly surprised when news came back that Napoleon had sold to the United States not only New Orleans, but the vast country called the Louisiana Territory, for the sum of \$15,000,000.00. Thus, Saint Louis became a part of the United States.

At the time of the purchase, Saint Louis was called the capital of upper Louisiana and the riverboat trade made Saint Louis a center of industrial activity.

Saint Louis was incorporated as a town on November 9, 1809 by authority of an act of the legislature of Louisiana, and had a population then of 4800.<sup>3</sup>

In 1815, the first steamboat, 'The Pike', arrived in Saint Louis. This was the beginning of increased prosperity and the opening up of communication and the more advantageous interchange of commodities.<sup>4</sup>

Missouri was admitted as a state in 1821, after resistance because of slavery in the state at that time. The fact that slaves could be brought to Missouri induced many people to come here from Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia.<sup>5</sup>

#### Early Saint Louis

In early Saint Louis, the French influence was the most prevalent in the cultural development of the city. Few Spanish families came to Saint Louis to live. French



customs and manners had been retained even under the Spanish rule. The music of the Catholic church was the standard church music of the city.

After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, when Saint Louis became a part of the United States, the city gradually developed into a center of immigration. With this migration of second and third generation Americans from the east, the American influence had its effect on the cultural development of the city. The English language gradually replaced the French and Spanish. Protestant churches were founded in various sections of the city. Saint Louis began to develop into an integral part of the United States. Soon the river boat trade began to flourish.

#### The First Known Negro Musicians

In early Saint Louis there were Negro slaves and servants. Some came with the French and Spaniards. (It is believed that some Negroes were in Saint Louis in 1764). Others migrated here with the white American settlers from various sections of the United States. According to the census taken in 1860, the population of Saint Louis was 160,773. Of this total, there were 1,600 slaves, and 1,000 free Negroes with a steady increase in the free population and a decrease in the slave population.

In 1870, there were 22,045 Negroes in Saint Louis



about one twelfth of the total population of the city.<sup>6</sup>

The combined songs of these slaves, free born and freed Negroes formed the basis of the music among their people.

A Negro violinist of note, whose name is now lost, came to Saint Louis with a French family, and it has been said that he played for many of the important affairs given in the city, and was an accomplished musician.<sup>7</sup>

In searching for names of early Negro musicians in Saint Louis, J.W. Postlewaite was found to be the first to have his compositions published.<sup>8</sup>

Postlewaite lived in the middle nineteenth century and besides being a composer he owned a music store. Among his compositions were:

1. Saint Louis National Guards Quickstep - 1855  
Published by B. and W. (Balmer and Weber)
2. Concert Hall Favorite Waltz  
Copyrighted by Ditson Company, 1850
3. Eliza Waltz  
Published by Beler in 1858
4. Dramatic Schottische  
Published by Pilcher Company in 1856.<sup>9</sup>

In the publication by James M. Trotter, the following Negro musicians were mentioned as being very prominent around 1879:

Georgetta Cox - Vocalist and Pianist  
Nellie Banks - Vocalist and Pianist



L. W. Henderson	- Vocalist
Alfred White & Samuel Butler	- Instrumentalists
James P. Thomas	- Violinist <sup>10</sup>

### The Negro and the Church

The church was a dominating factor in the life of the early Negroes in Saint Louis. As the Negroes working on the plantations were described in the previous chapter as being deeply religious, so were the ones in early Saint Louis. They continued to seek consolation in spiritual worship and clung to the church, which had been their main outlet for pent up emotions.

#### The First Baptist Church -

The First Baptist Church, first Negro church in Saint Louis, was founded as a Mission Sunday School in 1817. The founder was John Mason Peck, a white missionary sent to Saint Louis from Litchfield, Connecticut.<sup>11</sup> Peck and his assistant, Rev. J.E. Welch, proved to be a great inspiration to the Negro populace of Saint Louis. Peck was the head of this mission until 1825 when he ordained John Berry Meachum as its minister. John Berry Meachum soon became the first Negro Pastor of a church in Saint Louis.<sup>12</sup>

Some original records with other information concerning the early days of the First Baptist Church were lost in 1940 as a result of a fire, but it can be assumed that the music performed and sung in this, the



first Negro church in Saint Louis, was of such value as to influence somewhat the music in the churches that were founded later. It is reasonable to suppose that the congregation of this church sang hymns taught by the missionaries, and the spirituals and other songs of the southland brought to Saint Louis by the slaves. Peck taught them many of the hymns written by such noted hymnists as Isaac Watt, Charles Wesley and Lowell Mason.

Reverend Meachum remained as Pastor of the First Baptist Church until his sudden death in the pulpit in 1854. The work of this pioneer has been mentioned as being an example of courage, fearlessness, perseverance, vision and will power, characteristic of many of the early Negro leaders in Saint Louis.<sup>13</sup>

#### The Central Baptist Church -

In 1846 twenty-three members of the First Baptist Church obtained letters of dismissal to form the Central Baptist Church, the second African Baptist Church established in Saint Louis.<sup>14</sup> The dismissal was sought because of the need for a Baptist Church north of Market Street. The Negro community was developing along with the growth of the city, and was beginning to spread farther from the Mississippi River. As expressed in the history of Central Baptist Church:

"To lead these pioneers, and to give them courage and faith in the future, God appointed and sent forth the first three shepherds:



Richard Sneethen, John Richard Anderson, and Jesse Freeman Boulden".<sup>15</sup>

John Richard Anderson followed Sneethen as Pastor, and remained at this post for sixteen years, until his death.

#### Other Early Negro Churches -

The Saint Paul A.M.E. Church, founded in 1840, was the first African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) church west of the Mississippi. Union Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in 1847.<sup>16</sup>

The music sung and played in these early Negro churches had a tremendous influence on the development of the music among the Negroes in Saint Louis for these were the first public places in which the Negroes had the opportunity to congregate and express themselves freely in song. Another factor was that the music leaders in these early churches were the pioneers of this musical movement.

In 1873, St. Elizabeth Catholic Church, the oldest Catholic Church for Negroes in Saint Louis was founded. At these services, they observed the same mass as the other parishioners.

Gradually other churches of different denominations were founded or branches established, and thus the Negroes were eventually exposed to most of the common religious music which existed in American churches.



Besides being a place of worship, the church was also the site for most social affairs such as concerts, musical rehearsals, recitals, music studios and early schools. Practically all of the visiting artists gave their performances in the churches.

Being the music center of the community, the church was the place where many of the music leaders gave music lessons to members interested in reading music and learning how to perform musically. As trained singers who could read music notation came to Saint Louis and joined forces with the musical groups in the churches, anthems, oratorios and cantatas were added to the music of the churches.

Charles H. Brown, who came to Saint Louis to teach in the public school system, and later sang and conducted the Choir at Central Baptist Church, Angela Dietz Ferguson of Washington D.C., J. Arthur Freeman, a native Saint Louisan, Alice Richardson, Hortense Parker Woods, Candace Stokes and George Henderson, were given as names of music leaders of this period. Many of these were public school teachers and gave private music lessons in the churches. They also trained the choirs in various churches.

Angela Dietz Ferguson -

In conversation with I, Pearl Sexton, himself a music figure of this period, Angela Dietz Ferguson was



singled out as one of the outstanding influences in the development of Negro musicians in the latter part of the 19th century.<sup>18</sup> He stated that Mrs. Ferguson came to Saint Louis about 1886 from Washington, D.C. where she had obtained some vocal and instrumental musical training. She was considered to be one of the best musicians of this time, being an organist and pianist. Her services were in demand at both the white and Negro churches as she was one of the most versatile of the city organists in regards to the services of the various churches. Mrs. Ferguson trained many of the Negro singers and musicians for performances and positions as pianists or organists at the churches of the city. He continued; that if she discovered one with musical talent, she would encourage private training, and if necessary would offer this training without fee. She organized the Saint Louis affiliation of the National Coleridge Taylor Society, the forerunner of the National Negro Music Association, Inc. The purpose of this organization was to inspire, train and prepare singers. She also organized musical clubs for young aspiring singers, where the emphasis was on the development of the young voices. Two of her clubs, the Bijou and the Accelarande, produced many soloists. Mary V. Mack, one of these singers developed into one of the leading soloists in the churches and later became chorister of the Central Baptist Church, a position she retained until her death.



# 1. Pearl Sexton -

1. Pearl Sexton was a prominent figure in this musical movement, being a member of a family which was musically inclined. His father was a bass singer in the church choirs, and encouraged music instruction and participation. Sexton kept up this musical interest in his family. His daughters were given piano instructions, and his son, now a resident of Chicago, Illinois, was given instructions on the violin. The family was often presented in a group performance. Sexton was trained vocally by Nellie Strong, a white graduate of the Boston Conservatory of Music, and developed into one of the leading tenor soloists among the Negroes in Saint Louis before 1900. His son did not choose music for his livelihood, choosing instead the commercial field and was the first Negro to be hired in Chicago by the U. S. Government as a tabulator..<sup>19</sup>

Sexton, who taught school among the Indians in Oklahoma around 1890, attended Wilberforce University, in Wilberforce, Ohio after graduating from Sumner High School. Because of his obligations as a husband and father, instead of continuing in the field of music, he chose a vocation that would give him and his family more financial security. (The field of music has always been thus). In 1901, he was hired by the Saint Louis Board of Education as one of the first Negro custodians in the public schools of Saint Louis, a position he retained until his retirement in 1944.



While serving as custodian at the Wheatly School under John Arthur Freeman, Sexton often assisted the school in musical activities by playing the piano for kindergarten musical demonstrations.

During this period of employment in the various schools in the city, Sexton remained interested in music and attended most of the musical affairs in the community and played for private affairs. He is considered an authority on Negro history in Saint Louis.

Sexton stated that his greatest musical thrill was hearing Mme. Marie Selika, a 'true prima donna' in his words. Mme. Selika appeared in concert in Saint Louis in 1889. One of the musical groups organized and directed by Angela Dietz Ferguson, the Bijou Club, presented a vocal quartette on the program along with Mme. Selika. Included in the group were Mary V. Mack, soprano and I. Pearl Sexton, tenor. Accompanying the group on piano was Sumner Byron. Mme. Selika was so impressed by the group, she offered to take them with her on her coming trip to Europe. Sexton was not permitted by his father to take advantage of this offer. Of the group only Sumner Byron left with Mme. Selika. He worked with her as accompanist.<sup>20</sup>

John Arthur Freeman (J. Arthur Freeman)

During an interview with Mrs. Melanie Macklin Pruitt, mother of the late Captain Wendell Oliver Pruitt,



a hero of the Second World War, in whose memory a housing project in Saint Louis has been named, the work of John Arthur Freeman was highly praised as a musical influence. For many years he was the director of the St. Paul A.M.E. Church choir. Mrs. Pruitt was a member of this choir during this period. The names of Olivette Smith, Eva Powell, Georgetta Harvey, Laura Edwards, Emma Armstrong Thomas, Louise Davis, Frank Tanner, Henry Tanner and P.D. Lunceford were mentioned as other members of this group. Freeman was said to have taken his choir to many of the other churches of the city, both white and colored, for concert performances. Among these churches were the Temple Israel, then located at the site of the present Union Memorial M.E. Church at Leffingwell and Pine Street, and the Unitarian Church.

Mrs. Pruitt also mentioned a program presented in 1893 at the celebration of 'Thirty Years of Freedom'. This was an all-Negro performance with John Arthur Freeman as the musical director. Singers from many of the leading church choirs of the city were a part of this group.

Also mentioned was the Saturday afternoon programs presented at the Pythian Hall with Freeman in charge of the vocalists, and William 'Bill' Flowers in charge of the instrumentalists. This was a program looked forward to each week because at each performance a program was presented featuring a special soloist selected from one of

Mrs. Victor Lichtenstein, from whom Miss Story studied for some time. Mrs. Lichtenstein continued the work of



the church choirs.<sup>21</sup>

Freeman was also spoken of as being a teacher in the Saint Louis Public School System. His last position was as principal of the Wheatley School from which he retired in 1917.

Mabel C. Story -

The musical merits of John Arthur Freeman were also highly acclaimed by Miss Mabel C. Story, a contralto soloist, public school teacher and private music teacher. She spoke of J. Arthur Freeman as a great teacher and influence. Freeman studied music in Boston and brought back to Saint Louis the benefits of his musical training.<sup>22</sup> Miss Story was a student of Freeman's for over six years. She continued that Freeman always sought perfection in his teaching, and emphasized breathing, enunciation, and diction. The book used by Freeman was an importation from England, a Handbook for Singers by Norris Knocke, which stressed the fundamentals Freeman advocated. It is clear that vocal teachers have changed little!

Under Freeman, Miss Story studied most of the solos written for contralto voice in the operatic repertory. He prepared her for further study. These instructions were given at the home of Freeman located on Sarah Street near Finney Avenue.

When his health began to fail, Freeman recommended Mrs. Victor Lichtenstein from whom Miss Story studied for some time.<sup>23</sup> Mrs. Lichtenstein continued the work of



Freeman and Miss Story became more familiar with opera.

According to many that lived during this era, Mabel Story deveoped into a concert artist and credited J. Arthur Freeman for the start and encouragement given her.

Mabel O. Story attended the old L'Overture School under the principalship of Obadiah M. Woods. Miss Story also attended the Wheatly School and the Bannaker School before she entered the Sumner High School from which she graduated in 1897. She spoke of the music activities in these schools which included sight singing on an elementary level, daily singing and musical games. In her second year she was selected to sing a duet with Adele Harris at the commencement exercises at the Old Exposition Hall. Mrs. Lula Bradshaw Farmer, music teacher and locally prominent pianist, accompanied the singers on the piano.

Also mentioned during the interview was the fact that her father, Robert Story, played bass viol in the Schwartz German Band, being the only Negro in the band.

As were most of the music performers during this period, and even at the present time, she was very active in the music programs of the church, affiliating herself with the All Saints Episcopal Church where she was a member of the choir.

Vocal Department

Instructions will be given in the rudiments



### The Luca Conservatory of Music

In 1888, a group of Negro musicians and patrons of music founded the Luca Conservatory of Music.<sup>24</sup>

The following information was taken from an original book of the by-laws of the Luca Conservatory of Music which is in the possession of I. Pearl Sexton.

#### "Luca Conservatory of Music

Headquarters . . . . .	All Saints Episcopal Church 23rd and Washington Blvd.
James W. Grant . . . . .	President
Josiah W. Ferguson . . . .	Vice President
William Roderich . . . . .	Secretary
Wiley Brown . . . . .	Treasurer
J. Arthur Freeman . . . .	Musical Director
Angela Dietz Ferguson. . .	Pianist

#### Board of Directors:

Hale G. Parker. . . . .	Principal, No. 1 School
Edward S. Williams . . . .	Principal, No. 2 School
Wiley Brown	
Hutchins Inge	
James H. Harris	

#### Object:

Our purpose in forming this conservatory is to build up and maintain a chorus of mixed voices which can be used for the rendition of cantatas, oratorios, and operas.

We realize that there is exceptional talent among the young people of Saint Louis, which through this means will be brought forward and in the near future some of them may be filling lucrative positions in our church choirs a long felt wish.

#### Departments:

The conservatory shall be divided into departments - vocal and instrumental.

#### Vocal Department -

Instructions will be given in the rudiments



vocal music as well as in voice culture, solo and chorus singing.

#### Instrumental Department

In this department, instructions will be given on the piano, organ, string and woodwind instruments.

#### Membership:

Adults and children desiring to become members of the conservatory should make applications in writing to the Board of Directors.

#### Terms

Membership fee -Males \$1.00 -Females \$ .50  
Monthly dues -Males \$ .50 -Females \$ .25"

According to Sexton, this conservatory proved to be a factor in the continued development of the Negro in Music in Saint Louis. Many of the pioneers of this movement were in some way connected with this institution. Angela Dietz Ferguson was pianist and assisted in the instruction. Her husband Josiah Ferguson, himself a possessor of a fine voice, was vice president. The musical director J. Arthur Freeman, already mentioned as a music teacher of note, a choir director, and a tremendous influence on musicians of this era, was himself a talented tenor soloist. He was chosen to sing the tenor role in 'Hiawatha', a musical work of some international prominence, when it was performed in Washington, D.C. around 1900 under the directorship of the composer Coleridge Taylor, who came to the United States from his native England for this performance.<sup>25</sup>



Also connected with the conservatory was James H. Harris I, who was mentioned as one of the leading Negro violin soloists and a teacher of music during this period. Harris appeared in concert throughout the city and also trained many others on the string instruments. Harris was lauded by Paderewski, who while in Saint Louis for a concert appearance, was taken to hear Harris perform. Paderewski remarked on the artistic skill of Harris, and attempted to encourage him to go to Europe and further his study and seek international fame. Unfortunately family obligations denied Harris this opportunity.<sup>26</sup> Harris continued his musical activities in Saint Louis, and from his instruction, encouragement and inspiration, aided in the development of many other musicians. Among these was his son, the late James H. Harris II, who also became a violin soloist, a prominent music teacher, and music influence. James Harris III is active at the present time in the field of drum and bugle corps. but has not been as musically active as his father and grandfather.

#### Music in the Public Schools

After 1865, public education was made available for the Negroes in Saint Louis. Before, educational facilities for the Negroes were limited to private instructions. School sessions were held in the basements of Negro churches. Lucy Jefferson was one of the first Negro



teachers in Saint Louis. She held classes in the basement of the St. Paul A.M.E. Church.<sup>27</sup> Reverend H. H. White, then Pastor of Central Baptist Church, held classes at his church. J. Milton Turner, first United States Minister to Liberia, was a pupil in the school at First Baptist Church.<sup>28</sup>

With the emancipation proclamation as a pertinent factor, the status of the Negro in Saint Louis went through a progressive change. Greater opportunities were offered gradually. The establishment of public schools for Negroes was brought about by thinking citizens of both races. A petition was presented to the Board of Directors requesting public schools for Negroes in Saint Louis.<sup>29</sup> Another factor that led to the establishment of Negro public schools in Saint Louis was the attitude of liberal minded white citizens such as Ira Divoll, superintendent of schools, Felix Coste, president of the Board of Education and James Richardson who supported the petition for public schools for Negroes in Saint Louis.<sup>30</sup> There was a law established, a clause in the constitution of the state of Missouri, that separate schools could exist. This law became the 'Educational Bill of Rights' and paved the way for the establishment of schools for Negroes in Saint Louis.<sup>31</sup> Thus the evil of segregated education was started and perpetuated by well-meaning citizens who worked for the cause of equal, but separate, facilities.



In the early public schools for Negroes in Saint Louis, the teachers were all white. In 1877, Negro teachers were employed in these schools for the first time. The petition presented to the Board of Education by an educational council of nine Negroes, which included ministers, church and school leaders and laymen, requesting Negro teachers was a dominant factor in the hiring of such.<sup>32</sup> These teachers were hired after a search for qualified educators and the passing of competitive examinations. Most of these came to Saint Louis from other sections of the United States and brought with them many liberal ideas and customs. Among these imported educators were Hale G. Parker, Charles Howard Brown, from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, Obadiah M. Woods, who became principal of the L'Overture School, Charles Newton, of Alton, Illinois and graduate of the Shurtleff College there, who became principal of Simmons School, Richard Cole, from Cincinnati, Ohio, who proceeded Newton as principal of Simmons School and remained in that capacity for 50 years, Arthur Langston, of Virginia, (a graduate of Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio), George Vashon, for whom Vashon High School was named, and Edward Williams, of Portland, Maine, who became principal of Dessalines School.<sup>33</sup>



Many of these early Negro educators had been trained somewhat in music, and besides the music activities in their classrooms, they gave music lessons in their homes, and in the churches, thus becoming prominent in the music program in the community.

The white supervisors who periodically visited the Negro schools, with their apparent interest in the Negro students, proved to be valuable to the music program offered in the schools. Professor Palmer and Professor Revolt were mentioned by I. Pearl Sexton as supervisors during this period. They taught musical notation and fundamentals along with the classroom singing activities.

It was stated that the use of 'darker', 'pickaninny', and 'coon songs' were neither advocated nor permitted to be taught in the Negro schools, nor were other songs of the southland that ridiculed the Negro. It was not the purpose of these educators to destroy the sincerity and beauty of the Negro folk songs in their musical program, but to encourage the type of music culture and appreciation similar to that stressed in the other schools.

As more competent Negro teachers were hired, the services of white teachers in the Negro schools gradually was discontinued.

In 1881 another committee of Negro citizens made known to the Board of Education, by means of a petition,



their desire to have kindergarten facilities extended to the colored children of Saint Louis.<sup>34</sup> The petition was honored by the Board of Education in 1882, and one room was set aside in the Dumas School for kindergarten classes. Mrs. Sadie Topp was employed as the first Negro kindergarten teacher in the Saint Louis Public School system. With this appointment, musical activities were extended throughout the grades. As there were few pianos available for school activities, where the Board of Education did not furnish a piano, parents, teachers and community leaders donated pianos for the early grades.

#### Sumner High School -

Sumner High School, the first Negro high school in Saint Louis was founded in 1875. This was the first Negro high school west of the Mississippi River and the second high school to be established in Saint Louis.

Alvah C. Clayton, the first principal of Sumner High School (1875-1885) stressed academic studies and there were not many musical activities at the school. He was succeeded by Oscar Minor Waring, the first Negro principal of a high school in Saint Louis. Although Waring still advocated high academic standards, he added musical activities. In accordance with the desire of Waring to develop a music curriculum at Sumner High School, students were trained for performances at the commencement exercises.



The following musical numbers were performed at the Sumner High School commencement exercises in 1887:<sup>35</sup>

1. Chorus number 'Benedic Anima Mea'  
Darks
2. Quartette 'Sweet and Low'  
Members of Quartette: Misses Harrison and McLeod and Messrs Buener and Duke
3. Trio 'Invocation to Spring'  
Malmene  
Members of Trio: Misses Cassey, West and Edwards
4. Solo 'What ere Betide'  
Millard
5. Male Chorus 'Peace of the Soul'  
Fleming
6. Duet 'O'er the Hill, O'er the Dale' - Glover
7. Chorus number 'Our School Days are Over'  
Malmene
8. Chorus number

Waring was principal of Sumner High School from 1885 until 1908. In 1886 Sumner had its first Negro graduates, John Pope and Emma Vashon.

With the demand for more teachers and the request for native St. Louis Negro teachers, J. Arthur Freeman, Alice Richardson, and Nellie Porter, while students at Sumner High School were taken out of school and made teachers in the elementary schools because of their high academic standings and successful passing of examinations.<sup>36</sup> This slightly shocking procedure was not uncommon in both white and Negro schools of that day.

As the educational system of Saint Louis progressed additional educational facilities were made available to the



Negroes. In 1889, the first normal training class was organized for them, the Sumner Normal Training Class. Before 1889, all candidates for the teachers examination were required to have at least two years of high school training. In 1889, to raise the standard, one year of normal training was added to four years of high school training.<sup>37</sup>

In 1891, Sumner Normal Training Class had as its first graduates fourteen young women.<sup>38</sup> Among these was Ella M. Sevier, destined to become one of the music leaders and prominent organists in the city.

An observation made during various interviews was that the music programs in the schools and the churches were somewhat intermingled. The training obtained in the schools prepared the singers for the church choirs. Many of the leaders in the music programs of the churches were employed in the school system.

One of the most important music activities in the schools was the commencement exercises of the Sumner High School. Mrs. Angela Dietz Ferguson trained the singers for these exercises. She selected voices from the student body to comprise the commencement chorus.

#### Instrumental Music

The main instrumental music of this era was the pioneering efforts of the Negro musicians in the field of



jazz which will be discussed fully in Chapter VI.

In 1880, Samuel Butler organized what was known as the first Negro band in Saint Louis.<sup>39</sup> This band, composed of the best available performers on instruments among the Negro musicians, played for parades, park concerts and other affairs in the city.

William 'Bill' Flowers, was singled out as another of the early instrumental music leaders.

August 'Cap' Turner, was said to have had a Negro band in the Veiled Prophet Parade before 1900.<sup>40</sup> Whatever calibre musicians these were, this was a distinction that is not enjoyed even today, for there has not been a Negro band in a Veiled Prophet Parade for over thirty years.

In 1886 the Negro musicians of Saint Louis sent representation to Indianapolis, Indiana to a convention which resulted in the organization of the American Federation of Musicians. The Saint Louis representation was chartered Local No. 44, the first Negro local to become affiliated with the American Federation of Musicians.<sup>41</sup>

By 1900, as a result of the efforts of these musical pioneers, the movement of the Negro in music in Saint Louis had begun its first stage of development.

This was the beginning of a musical movement to be characterized by efforts of individuals with limited training, but with ambitions to keep a cultural atmosphere. Hugo, and Kunkel Schools of Music, were not accredited



prevailing among the Negro populace of Saint Louis and surrounding areas.

The efforts of these music leaders spread to other cities and as a result, many migrants came to Saint Louis and became a part of this movement. The geographical location and the progress of the movement resulted in nationally known Negro musical artists coming to Saint Louis for a concert or a visit.

#### Development of the Movement - 1900-1910

At the beginning of the 20th century, the musical movement of the Negro in music in Saint Louis was in its first stage of development. The Negro musical pioneers had laid the foundation, and as a result of their efforts, others were inspired to keep the movement progressing. Most of the names already mentioned, and many yet to be mentioned, may be quite unfamiliar to the reader, but the historical value of these individuals is incalculable for they and their associates were the prime movers of this musical movement. Their sincerity, community interest and activities meant more at that time than their musical sophistication.

In seeking musical education there were some Negroes during this period who were admitted to white music schools in Saint Louis. These schools, such as the Kroeger, Hugo, and Kunkel Schools of Music, were not accredited



music schools, but they did offer training in the various phases of music, and this seemed very valuable to the aspiring musicians who could afford such instruction. Of the early music schools, the Kroeger School continued through the years as a music school, and attained considerable local recognition as a bonafide music institution. From training obtained at the Kroeger School a number of Negro musicians, to be mentioned later, continued their musical activities.

Floy Mae Johnson was one of the first Negro students to be accepted at the Kunkel School of Music.<sup>42</sup> Ella Woods and Laura Washington were among the first Negroes to attend the Kroeger Music School. Private instructions were offered by Professor Galloway, one of the leading white teachers of the city.

Such leaders as Angela Dietz Ferguson and J. Arthur Freeman were still very active in the music programs of the churches and schools.

The World's Fair, which was held in Saint Louis in 1904, was a stimulus toward the development of the city because it brought the world to Saint Louis. With representatives from many countries, musicians were here from various sections of the globe and it can be assumed that music of these countries was heard throughout the activities of this exposition. Conversation with individuals who were present at the fair indicate that it



proved to be an incentive to the Negro musical movement in Saint Louis. Various affairs held during this event also gave an opportunity for the Negro musicians to display their talents along with other local musicians.

The church remained the community music center as it was the site for most of the social affairs. The early leaders were connected with the musical activities of the churches and as the other musicians came to Saint Louis they participated in the music programs of the church and the school. Through the years this relationship between the church and school activities proved to be characteristic of this movement.

#### Music in the Churches

The efforts and influence of Angela Dietz Ferguson was still a dominant factor. She was musical director at the Central Baptist Church, and continued to give organ recitals in the various churches along with her musical instruction. Mary V. Mack, one of her pupils, had developed into one of the leading soloists in the churches of the city where she often appeared in concerts. She assisted Mrs. Ferguson in her work with the choral groups at Central Baptist Church and eventually succeeded her as the chorister at the church.

The choir at the St. Paul A.M.E. Church was considered one of the leading choral groups in the city,



according to information obtained from many individuals interviewed who were in Saint Louis during this period. J. Arthur Freeman was still the choral director at St. Paul. Georgetta Harvey, a student of Freeman, was another of the singers featured in many of the churches in the city. She was considered one of the leading contraltos. In 1904 J. Arthur Freeman, with his St. Paul Choir as a nucleus, organized a choral group, 'The World's Fair Choir', and presented concerts in the city during the World's Fair celebration.<sup>43</sup> Georgetta Harvey, Melanie Macklin Pruitt, and Olivette Smith were among the members of this group. Ella Sevier performed on the organ with the choral groups of Freeman, and eventually succeeded him as choral director of the St. Paul A.M.E. Church.

As churches of various denominations were founded in the city, trained musicians became active in the organization and founding of choral groups. All Saints Episcopal Church was becoming a community music center. All Saints Episcopal had such individuals as John Mercer Langston, Mable Story, Hutchins Inge, a former member of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, Mabel Wheeler Evans, Harry Laird Phillips, Ida Burrell, William Huffman and Elmer Carey Campbell connected with the music of their church.

Other music leaders in the churches included Lonnie Harris, organist, Candace Seals Stokes, organist, Ada Jones, pianist and organist, also a student of Professor



Galloway and Myrtle Burgess, organist and pianist.

### Traveling Evangelists

Mentioned as another influence on the music of the churches were the traveling evangelists who came to Saint Louis for city wide meetings. With each evangelist there was usually a featured singer. Now such meetings would be considered as more or less a musical 'sideshow', because such gatherings would not present significant religious music, but the unsophisticated public during this period (and even today) looked forward to these meetings and also to the singers who traveled with the evangelists. As the church was their gathering place, and religion their solace, the inspiration from these meetings meant more to these people than the value of the music. The evangelistic meetings were often held at the now torn down Coliseum because of the fact that many of the church auditoriums could not accommodate the crowds. Among the evangelists were Reverend C. H. Morris, who brought with him Reverend Skipworth, a singer and composer of sort; and Reverend E. Arlington Wilson, who brought with him Reverend Britt, a singer. Many of the songs used by these evangelists were performed in the churches, as most of these ministers used their own songs. Many of the evangelists had their own song books, and these songs became a part of the repertory of some of the Negro churches.



Many of the churches founded earlier moved to larger quarters as the congregations increased. In many cases this proved to be of value to the music of the churches, for larger facilities were made available for the music activities, and organs were installed in many of the newer, larger buildings.

Along with the hymns, anthems, oratorios and cantatas, the Negro spirituals remained an integral part of the service. Madame Azalia Hackley made frequent visits to Saint Louis with her musical programs that tended to dignify the spirituals and other Negro religious folk music. During the programs she demonstrated what could be artfully done with the Negro folk songs. With the desire of many of the Negro musical leaders to perform European music and music written in the classical idiom by American composers, much of the beauty and sincerity of the Negro folk songs had been neglected, but with the visits of Madame Hackley and her musical groups to Saint Louis, the value of these songs to the music of America was given a new stimulus. As a result, inspiration was provided for many prospective leaders who were lacking in traditional musical training.

The appearances of the Fisk Jubilee Singers also had a dominant effect with a revived interest in Negro folk music.



### Music in The Schools

During this period, many steps were taken to expand the curriculum in the Negro high schools of Saint Louis. Although planned musical activity in the schools was limited to classroom singing, there were indications that the scope would broaden. The commencement exercises of the Sumner High School were considered as one of the outstanding musical events of the school program because it presented the students as soloists and as members of choral groups. These exercises were held at the Exposition Hall, located then at the present site of the Saint Louis Public Library. Sumner High School, then located at 15th and Walnut Street, did not have sufficient seating capacity to house the expected attendance for these exercises.

In 1907, a group of Negro citizens, including Dr. George E. Stevens, Pastor of the Central Baptist Church and Reverend D. D. Cook, Pastor of the St. Paul A.M.E. Church, expressed their desire for improvement of conditions and activities in the Negro schools by presenting a printed complaint to the Board of Education. They were, among other things, seeking adequate facilities at the Sumner High School, a broader curriculum, and addition of extra curricular activities, especially those with cultural value.<sup>44</sup> Among the items included was the fact that there were no organized choral groups, nor a school



orchestra at Sumner. As a result of this complaint, plans were made to alleviate these conditions. Fortunately there were members of the faculty capable of beginning expansion of activities.

### Leaders in the Schools

A number of prominent Negro educators became employed in the Saint Louis Public School System during this period, and their interest in the development of a broader musical program began a new era in the music movement of the Negro in Saint Louis. Although their musical training and experience was sometimes limited, their interest and sincerity took precedence over their musical deficiencies, and their efforts laid the foundation for the specialized music instruction that came into the school system in later years.

Among these leaders were Harry Laird Phillips, son of a Philadelphia Episcopal priest. Phillips played organ in his father's church before coming to Saint Louis. He came to Saint Louis around 1902 as a member of the faculty of Sumner High School. He was a 1898 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>45</sup> After coming to Sumner, Phillips became active in the music program, although he was employed as a mechanical arts instructor. He was one of the first to begin the development of an instrumental music program in the Negro schools of Saint Louis as an



extra curricular activity. He rehearsed groups before and after school and thus the instrumental groups augmented the vocal groups as this program developed.<sup>46</sup>

John Mercer Langston, a native Saint Louisan, was another of the educators who aided in the development of the music program in the schools of Saint Louis. Langston who graduated magna cum laude from Oberlin College of Oberlin, Ohio in 1901, came to Sumner High School from Tuskegee Institute where he and Harry Laird Phillips had taught under the leadership of the noted Booker T. Washington.<sup>47</sup>

Another of these educators interested in the music program of Sumner High School was William Henry Huffman, who came to Sumner High School in 1902, after having received his A. B. degree from Dennison University of Ohio in 1885, and having done additional study at Cornell and Harvard Universities. His daughter, Ethel Huffman developed into one of the leading performers and music instructors in the city until her recent death.

Elmer Carey Campbell, the first athletic coach at Sumner and father of the noted cartoonist E. Simms Campbell, served as acting principal of Sumner High School after the resignation of Oscar Waring in 1908. Campbell was interested in the further development of the music program. He carried on the work begun by Waring in seeking broader musical activities for the students. He often played



the piano for the music classes.

White supervisors such as Miss Finn of Central High School, Mr. Woods, and Mr. Coburn aided in the music programs of the Negro high schools during their frequent visits. Mary Lou Williams, a student of Sumner, often accompanied Miss Finn on the piano during her musical activities at Sumner High School.

Mary V. Mack, teacher at the L'Overture School, Mabel Story, teacher at Simmons School, and Josiah Ferguson, were cited for their efforts in the musical activities in the elementary schools, and preparing the grade school students for high school musical participation.

### Instrumental Music

During this period, the instrumental music program among the Negro musicians was in an early stage of development. In the field of jazz, the Saint Louis Negro became more prominent.<sup>48</sup> In the field of brass band music, there were some musicians who were important during this period and have been credited for the development of some of Saint Louis' leading instrumentalists.

P. B. Langford, an instrumental music teacher, was one of the leading band instructors among the Negro musicians.<sup>49</sup> He was said to have instructed more bands during his active period than anyone else in the state of Missouri.<sup>50</sup>



William 'Bill' Flowers, another instrumental music leader organized an orchestra during this period and played for many of the affairs given.

Again, the factor of interest, inspiration and sincere participation must overshadow the limited training of these musicians.

During the World's Fair celebration, Negro instrumental musical groups took an active part in the programs. A band under the leadership of Dinks Cooperidge was one of these. Among the musicians who performed during this fair were Bill Flowers, Steve Adams, Gene McDonald, P. B. Langford, Boisey Franklin, Grant Cooper, Major McElroy and Jimmy Wilkinson.<sup>51</sup> These names may mean little to the reader but some of the above named were pioneers in the band and brass band activities of the Negro in Saint Louis.

Some of the Saint Louis Negro musicians were also active as band performers out of town. Luke Baker, a trumpet player, led a band for the Ringling Brothers Circus and the 101 Ranch Road Show.<sup>52</sup>

In 1906 around the lunch table at the post office, plans were devised to organize a band among the Negro employees. With Albert Simms as the leader, this band was organized soon after. The group was first known as the Post Office band, and later the name was changed to Simms Band.<sup>53</sup> They played for school picnics, church



picnics, parades and for other such events in and around Saint Louis. The band carried on with varied personnel until the death of Simms in 1942. This writer attended many picnics where the Simms Band furnished the music.

Original members of the Post Office Band included: Paul Poston, George Butler, R. S. McWhorter, Willie Harvey, Albert Palmer, trumpets; Edward (Eddie) McKinney, Pete Jones, Jake Smith, alto horns; R. Burnett, John Duke, trombones; Robert Mims and William Spencer, basses; Edward Bolden, Claude Williams, and Emmett Brown, drums; and Albert Simms, leader.

James H. Harris II began his musical career during this period, following in the footsteps of his father, the late James H. Harris I, and developed into an important figure by his musical efforts.<sup>54</sup>

The activities of the instrumental music performers among the Negroes of Saint Louis were limited to jazz and brass band music. Even if they were talented enough for participation in chamber music groups or symphony or chestras, the opportunity was never made available to them, and this condition remains with us even today. Whether these musicians possessed such ability will never be known. The level of musical sophistication of the general Negro public and the lack of funds has usually precluded the practicality of establishing and sustaining all Negro



symphonies or chamber groups although there was an attempt in 1932. Saint Louis was continually growing, and the Negro

population was becoming larger. This expansion called for

#### Individual Accomplishments

##### Georgetta Harvey

As individual artists, both vocal and instrumental were being developed, some were leaving the city seeking national recognition. Probably the most successful during this era was Georgetta Harvey, who left Saint Louis in 1904 to exploit her musical talents.<sup>55</sup>

#### Trend of the Movement

By the end of this period, the movement of the Negro in Music in Saint Louis was well into the stage of development. Plans had been devised to have organized musical groups at Sumner High School, both vocal and instrumental. Many of the churches were in their present day locations. The work of the musical pioneers of the movement was being carried on by successors whose ideal perpetuated the movement. Instrumental music was coming into its own as a music medium. Teachers of higher degrees of education were being employed in the entire school system and specialized music teachers were being sought to take over the music programs in the schools.

The success of Georgetta Harvey was an inspiration for others to attempt to follow in her footsteps, and more aspiring musicians sought musical training in the music



schools of the city and of other localities.

Saint Louis was continually growing, and the Negro population was becoming larger. This expansion called for more schools, and churches. As these schools and churches were established more musical opportunities were afforded.

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The Saint Louis Story

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5. Stevens, Walter

Saint Louis, the Fourth City

P. S. Clark Publishing Company, St. Louis, Missouri  
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6. Ibid.

7. According to notes and information given and  
viewed during interview with Ernest Mason, Jr.  
February 16, 1934.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Trotter, James

Music and Song Highly Developed, p. 320.  
Charles T. Dillingham, New York City, 1898.

11. According to information obtained from Historical  
Facts of the First Baptist Church, in possession  
of Julia Davis.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid. For full account of life and activities of  
Rev. Mason see Appendix V.



## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1. "Saint Louis Facts"  
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2. Public School Messenger  
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3. Devey, John  
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6. Ibid
7. According to notes and information received and viewed during interview with Ernst Krohn on February 15, 1954.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Trotter, James  
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12. Ibid.
13. Ibid. For full account of life and activities of Rev. Meachum see Appendix V.



14. History of the Central Baptist Church, Nov. 1927  
The King Publishing Company, 1927. St. Louis, Mo.  
Copyright: George E. Stens, D.D. Pastor of  
Central Baptist Church
15. Interview with I. Pearl Sexton, March 2, 1955.
15. Ibid
16. Information from compiled information in possession  
of Julia Davis.
17. Ibid. and Stens Teachers Survey of Saint Louis  
Missions - Growth and Development  
Thesis submitted for requirements of Masters  
Degree at State University of Iowa, Iowa City
18. Interview from I. Pearl Sexton, February 21, 1955
19. Ibid
20. Ibid
21. Interview with Mrs. Melanie Macklin Pruitt, Dec.  
20, 1954
22. Interview with Mabel Story, March 13, 1955.
23. Ibid
24. The Luca Conservatory was not an accredited music  
school, nor was it considered on a par with the  
few recognized music schools of the city, but it  
was an organized attempt of the Negro music  
leaders of this period to offer training and  
guidance to interested Negro musicians. This was  
one of the characteristics of this movement.

As few Negroes were afforded the opportunity of advanced musical education in this area of any sort, and obviously the music leaders among the Negroes had limited training, it was quite an effort to organize and operate such a school as this. From conversation with some that lived during this period, it is evident that they were proud of this music school.

It will be noted throughout this dissertation that many other such music schools were organized, but it was not until 19 when Washington University opened its door to the undergraduate Negro student as well as the graduate, that they



31. had the opportunity of accredited advanced musical training. This was one of the many disadvantages of customs in a border city such as Saint Louis .
25. Interview with I. Pearl Sexton, March 3, 1955.
26. Ibid
27. Davis, Julia  
Harris and Stowe Teachers College in Saint Louis Missouri - Growth and Development, 1937  
 Thesis submitted for requirements of Masters Degree at State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, August 1, 1941
28. Ibid
29. Ibid
30. Ibid
31. Statements of spokesmen in behalf of education for Negroes:
32. Supt. Ira Divoll: "It is a well known fact that the colored people of this city pay taxes on their property; they should, therefore, as a matter of right and justice, as a matter of principle - without entering at all into the question of their political right - receive in educational facilities the benefit of their taxation. Their interests and rights are respectfully commended to the attention of the Board." Eleventh Annual Report of BoFE (Aug. 1865)
33. President of Board: Felix Coste "Indeed the Board of Public Schools have already recognized the claim of the colored people to a portion of the school revenues, by appropriating a part of the money required to carry on the colored schools during the past year, and they are willing to make further appropriation for the same purpose, but they have not sufficient means to built houses, and establish, and maintain schools for this class of children; they must await the action of the legislature."



31. Ibid
32. Ibid
33. From notes of Julia David kept in connection with her thesis. Op. Cit. Footnote No. 27, Chapter II
34. Information from thesis of Julia Davis. Op. Cit. Footnote No. 27, Chapter II
35. This program in the possession of Julia Davis, originally possessed by Beulah Roots Jackson, one of the graduates. Exercises held at Exposition Building, Monday, June 20, 1887.
36. Op. Cit. Footnote No. 27, Chapter II
37. Ibid
38. Ibid
39. According to information obtained from I. Pearl Sexton
40. According to information obtained from Eddie McKinnie one of the instrumental music pioneers and labor leaders
41. Ibid
42. Information obtained during interview with Julia Davis and I. Pearl Sexton
43. Information obtained during interview with Melanie Macklin Pruitt
44. Copy of this complaint is among the possessions of Julia Davis and was viewed during interview.
45. Information obtained during interview with Julia Davis.
46. Information obtained during interview with Lewis Crenshaw, who was in one of the groups organized and rehearsed by Phillips.



47. Interview with Julia Davis.
48. Jazz in Saint Louis will be fully discussed in Chapter VI.
49. See Appendix VI for detailed information concerning P. B. Langford.
50. According to information obtained from Eddie McKinney during interview.
51. Ibid
52. Ibid
53. Ibid
54. For account of life and activities of James H. Harris II see Appendix VII.
55. For account of musical career of Georgetta Harvey see Appendix VIII.



## CHAPTER III

### THE NEGRO IN MUSIC IN SAINT LOUIS 1910-1930

#### Influence of the Public School

#### 1910 until 1920

During the years 1910 to 1920, the movement of the Negro in music in Saint Louis was in its second stage of development. Before the end of this period, many of the early Negro musical pioneers had died or were inactive and their associates and students were succeeding them as music leaders. Such pioneers as Angela Dietz Ferguson, J. Arthur Freeman, and James H. Harris I, were deceased, and others such as Mary V. Mack, Mabel Story, Ella Sevier and James H. Harris II were replacing them.

The Negro community of Saint Louis was expanding, necessitating more schools, churches and musical activities.

The need for advanced education was being realized by the Negroes of Saint Louis, and as educational opportunities and facilities were becoming available and taken advantage of, some community leaders became prominent. The musical movement among the Negroes benefited from this trend as aspiring musicians, influenced by the work of the pioneers, sought higher training and education in preparation of their desired careers. Among these was Myrtle Burgess, a native Saint Louisan who graduated from Sumner High School in 1905 and continued her education at Toronto Conservatory of Music in Canada where she completed



an artist course. After a year of apprentice work at Lincoln Institute (now Lincoln University) of Jefferson City, Missouri, Miss Burgess returned to Saint Louis and began her career as a private teacher of music, specializing in piano instructions, a vocation she has followed since.<sup>1</sup>

The instrumental music program among the Negroes in Saint Louis expanded during this period also. The jazz musicians became more prominent nationally between the years 1910 and 1920, but instrumentalists in other phases of music became quite popular locally. Previously, the instrumentalists were confined mostly to performing in dance halls, saloons, and other similar places. Many of the ministers refused to have instrumental music in their churches, thinking instruments other than the organ were 'devices of evil', and 'instruments of the devil', which belonged in dance halls and saloons.<sup>2</sup> These ministers were happy to replace the pianos in their churches with organs because they felt the piano was an instrument better suited for dancing. Some of the instrumentalists began a campaign to prove to the ministers that their instruments could add to the music program in the churches. Gradually liberal minded ministers began adding these along with the organ, accepting them as assets to the music activities in the churches. Among the musicians who began performing in the various churches were James H. Harris II,



who played violin at Saint Paul A.M.E. Church and later at Saint James A.M.E. Church, Will Vassar and Grant Cooper who played the violin and clarinet respectively at Central Baptist Church and William Blue who played trumpet at various churches. With the addition of these instruments, the choral directors were given opportunity to offer music that required such instruments for complete performance.

Among the musicians who came to Saint Louis during this period to become an important part of the music program was Willette Jeffries Haley, currently a vocal instructor at Sumner High School. Her coming to Saint Louis proved to be a tremendous value to the music programs of the churches and the schools.

Another boost and inspiration to the Negro musicians of Saint Louis was the organization of the National Association of Negro Musicians Incorporated in 1917. Many of the prominent Negro musicians in America were charter members of this organization as they were in attendance at this first meeting. Such individuals as Carl Diton, Nathaniel Dett, and Clarence Cameron White were among these. (This organization from the time of its organization until the present time has been principally dominated by musicians not associated with jazz.) Mabel Story was among the Saint Louis charter members of this organization and the impetus she and other Saint Louisans



received from this gathering inspired them to set up plans for the consequent organization of a Saint Louis chapter.

One of the important musical factors of this period was the hiring of J. Gerald Tyler of the Saint Louis Board of Education as the first Negro music specialist in the public school system.

#### Gerald Tyler

As the educational program in Saint Louis was expanding, there came a dire need for supervision in the various phases of the curriculum. In 1911, J. Gerald Tyler, more commonly known as Gerald Tyler, was hired by the Board of Education of Saint Louis to become head of the Music Department of Sumner High School, and music supervisor for the Banneker, Delaney, Dessalines, L'Overture, Simmons, and the Wheatly Negro elementary schools.

Tyler came to Saint Louis from Kansas City, Missouri where he had served as music supervisor in Negro schools since 1907. After his graduation from Oberlin School of Music in Oberlin, Ohio in 1905, he served in a similar capacity in Washington, D.C.<sup>3</sup>

Without a doubt, Gerald Tyler was the outstanding individual associated with music in the Negro schools during this period. His close association with the pupils



was considered one of his outstanding characteristics.<sup>4</sup>

During his frequent visits to the elementary schools, Tyler worked skillfully with the children and his methods soon became common practice with the elementary school teachers associated with music. Tyler also instructed music at the Sumner Teachers College where he taught systems of music instruction to the prospective teachers.

Among the many musical activities of Gerald Tyler while in the Saint Louis Public School System was his presentations of such light musical works as 'Hiawatha', 'Bohemian Girl', and 'Chu Chin Chow'. In spite of the limited musical value of some of these works, this was still quite an accomplishment in a school system where the musical activities were previously limited to classroom singing, and musical instructions from supervisors during their routine visits to the schools. The community anxiously awaited these productions which were presented with required scenery, costumes, soloists, choruses and such.<sup>5</sup> Many individuals who participated in these presentations, and were under the tutelage of Tyler, continued their musical activities and became music and education leaders. Among these were Ethel Huffman, pianist for many of these productions, Zella Cole, Hunton, and Mabel Story, soloists. According to Miss Hunton, Tyler saw that the staging for these presentations was as near perfect



as possible, and that every detail was carried out. For his productions Tyler was very meticulous. His aim was performance, and if sources other than the school provided the voice or individual needed, Tyler would seek this person.<sup>6</sup>

#### Tyler in the Church and The Community -

Along with his activities in the public schools, Gerald Tyler taught voice and piano in his home. Following the trend of his predecessors such as Angela Dietz Ferguson, Tyler would give music lessons without charge to many aspiring musicians in his effort to encourage continued musical activities. Tyler also participated in the music programs of the churches. He instructed various choral groups, and directed the music presented at many of the church conventions and community gatherings. He was organist and choir director at the Union Memorial A.M.E. Church.

#### Tyler as a Composer and Artist -

The presence of Tyler in Saint Louis added prestige to the Negro musicians here. He had achieved acclaim as a composer, baritone soloist, and concert pianist.

Although an importation, the fact that most of his significant works were done in Saint Louis and his musical activities ceased somewhat when he left caused most people to consider him a Saint Louis musician.<sup>7</sup>



In 1921, Ernst Krohn, of the Music Department of Saint Louis University, sent out a questionnaire to most of the music personalities in the Saint Louis area in compiling material for his book based on activities of musicians in Missouri. The following compositions of Tyler were included in the information obtained from Tyler:

Compositions of Gerald Tyler:

Published Works

1. Neath the Elms - (written while Tyler was a student at Oberlin. Appears in the Oberlin College Song Book.
2. Magnificat in E Minor - (written for All Saints Church, Saint Louis, Missouri. Published by Shattinger Music House, 1914)
3. Ships that Pass in the Night - (Boston, Louisville, Washington, D.C. and New York newspapers made special mention of this composition sung by Roland Hayes in concert)
4. A Syrian Lullaby
5. Daisies
6. Freedom's Call - a War Song

Unpublished Works

1. The Last Appeal
2. Sonata in E Minor for Piano
3. Lead Gently Lord - (A mixed anthem written as a memorial to the author Paul Lawrence Dunbar)
4. Shine on Mistah Sun
5. Afterglow
6. Eight Mother Goose Songs



7. Easter Morning - (Sunlight and Shadow) for Violin
8. Heart of Fancy
9. Time of Roses
10. Last Night and This
11. Rippling Waters
12. Cantata - Tribal Cain
13. Hassam - A Dance Suite for Piano
14. Little Red Riding Hood - (Descriptive piece written for Play-Day Festival in Saint Louis, Missouri, August, 1920)
15. Overture and Incidental music to Prologue for Centennial Drama, October, 1921 - Saint Louis, Missouri
16. Alms for the Love of Allah  
Duet for baritone and soprano - (The U.S. Marines Band Orchestra played the accompaniment to this work on May 1903 at the Academy of Music, Baltimore, Maryland)

Tyler also wrote musical numbers for the pageant "Ala Baba and the Forty Thieves" presented at the Municipal Theatre in Forest Park in August, 1921.

(See Appendix IX for examples of compositions of Gerald Tyler).

The composition 'Neath the Elms', written while Tyler was a student at Oberlin, appears in the Oberlin College Song Book.<sup>8</sup>

Another of the distinctions of Gerald Tyler while in Saint Louis, was being chosen as one of the three musicians to write the Centennial Drama music in commemora-



tion of the 100th anniversary of the admission of Missouri to the Union. This music was performed by the Morning Choral Club and the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra in 1921.<sup>9</sup>

As a baritone soloist, among other appearances, Tyler appeared in the presentation of 'Hiawatha' in Washington, D.C. with the composer S. Coleridge Taylor as conductor.<sup>10</sup>

After his graduation from Oberlin, Tyler gave his first recital as piano soloist in Columbus, Ohio in 1904. It is said that the Governor and Mrs. Myron Herrick of Ohio headed the list of patrons.<sup>11</sup> Tyler gave many recitals devoted to his own compositions. Among these were ones held at Oberlin in 1920, City Club in Saint Louis in 1922 and at Kansas City, Missouri in 1922.

Gerald Tyler left Saint Louis in 1922 after suffering a paralytic stroke which curtailed his activities. There are some who think that his stroke was partially caused by his strenuous schedule. This is highly possible for during the years 1911 to 1922 his numerous activities left little time for relaxation. Those years will long be remembered as the 'Musical Era of Gerald Tyler'. His value to the entire community and especially to the music movement of the Negro in Saint Louis could be summed up in the following statements:



Ethel Huffman, former music teacher and consultant in the Saint Louis Public School System said of Tyler:

"His ambition was to have Saint Louis music culture equal to that of any other city in the United States. More than any one else, he brought a closer relationship between the school and the community. He was a tempestuous and ardent worker, and obtained results from the high school students that have been seldom equaled. He set a reputation for choral effects. He gave private lessons and instructions without charge in hope of developing and inspiring youngsters to seek further musical activities."<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Ruth Harris, previously mentioned as a Director of Education in Saint Louis, and one of the pianists who played for the school productions of Tyler stated:

"He was a tireless worker, and one that most of the individuals associated with him enjoyed working for and with. From his inspiration others were influenced to further their musical activities. The greatest affairs of the school programs were his operettas and musical events."<sup>13</sup>

Zelle Cole Hunton relates:

"He inspired me, and other performers to live the roles we portrayed in his productions. He spent many hours achieving this point. His worth to the community was shown by his inviting anyone in the community to participate in his productions. He was such an inspiration that the participant would do everything in their power to make any production a tremendous success."<sup>14</sup>

Edward Hamilton, a retired public school principal and patron of music speaks of Tyler:

"He proved to be of great value to the city of Saint Louis. His coming here was a God send."<sup>15</sup>

As has been stated, the influence of Gerald Tyler



Oliver Shattinger, president of the Shattinger Music Publishing House of Saint Louis says:

"Tyler was a man of special talents. He was a very good musician generally. He was an original composer as all of his published works indicate. It is to be regretted that he passed on while still quite young."<sup>16</sup>

"<sup>17</sup>

When Gerald Tyler left Saint Louis, he returned to Oberlin, Ohio to retire from musical activities. He was disheartened because his right hand was paralyzed. He thought he would never be able to play the piano again. Clarence Cameron White, noted violinist, was said to have had music written especially for Tyler that could be played with the left hand.<sup>18</sup> This was done in an attempt to encourage Tyler to continue his musical activities. This music brought new life to Tyler and he began to practice on the piano again.

Edward Hamilton visited Tyler in Oberlin and invited him to come back to Saint Louis for a recital. Tyler returned and was presented in a piano recital at Poro College playing with his left hand. He was also presented in recital in Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup>

After a series of such concerts, Tyler returned to Oberlin where he remained until his death on May 17, 1938 at the age of 59.

Influence of Tyler - Saint Louis Public School System

As has been stated, the influence of Gerald Tyler



is still being felt in Saint Louis and elsewhere. From the inspiration, instruction and efforts of Tyler, others have been so inspired to continue their musical activities. Upon the advise of Tyler, Ethel Huffman continued her education and attended Oberlin College after graduation from Sumner High School. At Oberlin she was a member of the musical union while still a freshman. After leaving Oberlin, she studied harmony with Heacox and Lane, and was a student under Edward Dickinson, musical historian, studied violin under Dr. Gehrkins, studied with Hollis Dann at New York University. She also studied piano with Ernest Kroeger of Saint Louis, Percy Grainger and Rudolph Ganz, both well known in music circles. She had a special artist pupil training at various schools.

Ethel Huffman traveled widely giving violin and piano concerts. She has written books on various phases of music and music activity included is a book for kindergarten children entitled 'Singable Songs for Tiny Tots', which has been published by the Shattinger Publishing Company of Saint Louis.

Among the other musical activities of Ethel Huffman, was the training of choirs and choruses in the Saint Louis area. She credited Tyler for giving her the incentive to continue musical activities.

She remained in the Saint Louis Public School System as music consultant until her death in 1957.



performer Zella Cole Hunton - from White's opera 'Oyango' which Zella Cole Hunton, because of her musical experience and association with Tyler, also continued her musical activities. After studying with Tyler, she also attended Oberlin Musical College. After returning to Saint Louis, she was presented as soprano soloist in many concerts. She also worked in the capacity of music supervisor in the Saint Louis Public Schools for a period of three years. After the death of her father, Richard Cole, who was a principal of Simmons Elementary School, she retired from regular concertizing and limited her musical activities to private teaching, working with the music groups at First Baptist Church and composing simple tunes for her work. Most of her compositions were for programs presented at her church.

Dr. Ruth Harris spoke of her sister Josephine Curtis as another of Tylers' musical associates who appeared in many of his musical productions at Sumner High School. After graduation from Sumner, Mrs. Curtis moved to South Bend, Indiana, where she utilized the training received from Tyler and kept active musically. She has made many contributions to the community of South Bend with her musical presentations.

One of her more important projects was the premier



performance of Clarence Cameron White's opera 'Ouango' which she presented in South Bend in 1950. The composer brought his family to South Bend for this performance. Also in attendance was the Ambassador from Haiti to the United States. His presense was sought because of the Haitian setting of the opera. From reports, the presentation was a success.<sup>20</sup> Following this performance Mrs. Curtis continued her activities in the community presenting other musical works.<sup>21</sup>

#### Music in The Churches

During this period, as was the procedure in previous eras, the music leaders in the community were leaders in the music of the various churches.

Gerald Tyler was organist and choral director at the Union Memorial A.M.E. Church. Mary V. Mack had replaced Angela Dietz Ferguson as choral director at the Central Baptist Church. Elmer Keaton, considered by many as one of the better organists in the city, served as organist at All Saints Episcopal Church. Keaton also had some of his compositions published by the Shattinger Publishing Company. Myrtle Burgess succeeded Mr. Keaton as organist at All Saints Church around 1918. Ella Sevier had replaced J. Arthur Freeman as music director at Saint Paul A.M.E. Church where she remained as organist.

period was Mrs. Eliza E. Ford, who came in 1918 from San



Willetta Jeffries Haley -

Willetta Jeffries Haley, who came to Saint Louis in 1912 from Jackson, Tennessee where she was attending high school, began her musical work in Saint Louis during this period. Upon graduation from Sumner High School in 1914, she attended Lane College. Later she attended Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia where she studied under Nathaniel Dett. Upon her return to Saint Louis, she attended Sumner Teachers College. Being the daughter of a C.M.E. minister, her greatest interest was the music in the churches. She felt that church congregations should be exposed to the best available music, and she began to work towards achieving this.<sup>22</sup> Soon she began working in the C.M.E. churches in Saint Louis. She has been organist at Scruggs Memorial C.M.E. Church for the past 25 years, after having been organist at Lane Tabernacle C.M.E. Church for 9 years. She was one of the first to present oratorios in the C.M.E. churches of Saint Louis.<sup>23</sup> Among her many students are Dorothy Johnson, organist at Lane Tabernacle, and Alphonso Casey, director of the Lane Tabernacle senior choir.

Mrs. Eliza Ellsford -

Another of the present day music leaders in the Negro churches that migrated to Saint Louis during this period was Mrs. Eliza Ellsford, who came in 1918 from San



Antonio, Texas. Mrs. Ellsford after her graduation from the San Houston College in Austin, Texas, was very active in the musical programs of the churches in Texas.<sup>24</sup>

Coming from the Saint Paul A.M.E. Church in San Antonio, Mrs. Ellsford immediately became active musically in Saint Louis as she succeeded Gerald Tyler as organist and choral director at the Union Memorial A.M.E. Church. Carrying on the work of such an established leader as Tyler presented a challenge, but this was readily accepted by Mrs. Ellsford and she soon proved her capability and worthiness. Through the years she has remained as organist and minister of music at the Union Memorial Church doing her share in the continued development of musicians and presenting the best of music in her church that opportunity and circumstances affords.

#### Other Music Leaders in the Churches -

Among others active in the Negro churches during this period, were Mrs. Evans, who was director of the choir at the Gaililee Baptist Church from 1914 until 1919 and Mrs. Eva Wilkerson who was organist at this church during this period and until 1923.<sup>25</sup> At Pleasant Green Baptist Church, Edward Buford was choir director. He has organized the senior choir at this church in November of 1908 and served as choir director until 1927. Mrs. Mattie Howard became pianist at Pleasant Green Baptist Church in



1919, a position she still maintains.<sup>26</sup>

These names may have little significance musically, for it is quite evident that these individuals mentioned were not highly sophisticated or well-trained musicians, but such individuals mean much to the history of this movement for they were among the leaders while the music program among the Negroes of Saint Louis was developing. As advanced musical education was sought, more competent leaders became associated with the churches as well as other community meeting places, but until these leaders became active, the movement progressed with the musicians available.

Also continuing their activities were organists Lonnie Harris, Candace Seals Stokes, and Ada Jones. Mr. Boeschentz, white organist called 'Professor Boeschentz' because of his apparent advanced musical training, played organ at Central Baptist Church where Mary V. Mack was choral director. He was considered a competent teacher of organ and piano. Among his students were Amos Tandy, who eventually became organist at Central Baptist Church, and Lewis Crenshaw, who has been active as pianist for many years both in the religious and popular music field.

#### Instrumental Music at Sumner High School

The vocal music program at Sumner High School enjoyed a vast growth under Gerald Tyler. He took advantage



of the talent of the students and the opportunity afforded him by the Board of Education of Saint Louis. The instrumental music program was yet to be developed as the Board of Education had not added an instrumental music program to the curriculum of Sumner High School at this time the only Negro high school in Saint Louis and only public high school Negroes could attend.

Harry Laird Phillips continued his work with students interested in the organization of an instrumental group, and this group performed with Tyler in some of the musical activities presented at the school. It has been said that Phillips instilled an interest in the young aspiring musicians for such musical participation, and from his inspiration many of these students began their musical careers.<sup>27</sup>

Among these students who played in the groups formed by Phillips were Lewis Crenshaw, trumpet player then, who has since changed his major instrument to piano and is still active in Saint Louis as a professional musician; Harvey Langford, trombonist, whose father has been discussed as an instrumental music leader and who continued his musical work to become one of the leading jazz orchestra leaders in Saint Louis; Andrew Webb, trumpet player yet active; Winston Walker, horn and trombone player who continued his musical activities until 1939, when he became an officer in the Negro Musicians Union of



Saint Louis; and David Grant, cello, who discontinued his musical activities and became one of the prominent lawyers in the city. He was one of the members of the Board of Freeholders, a group elected to revise the city charter of Saint Louis, and more recently was appointed legislative advisor for the Saint Louis Board of Alderman.

It was the efforts of such individuals as Phillips, mechanical drawing instructor, that eventually led to the hiring of instrumental music instructors and band directors in the Negro schools of Saint Louis.

Instrumental Music Program in the Community(excluding jazz)

By 1910, the instrumental music program among Negro musicians in Saint Louis was expanding. The musicians participating in jazz were gaining national prominence as Saint Louis was the cradle of some phases of jazz. Many of the jazz musicians were also active in other phases of music, for the brass bands served as a school for the development of instrumentalists.

The accomplishments of P.B. Langford with instrumentalists had become known in the vicinity and he was invited to instruct bands in neighboring towns.<sup>28</sup> Besides his work with Negro bands he also instructed white bands in and around Saint Louis.<sup>29</sup> The Simms Band was one of the outstanding bands playing for picnics,



parades, and other community affairs.

William Blue, besides being a good trumpet player, was a band instructor and music leader. While a student at Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama, he composed a march 'Tuskegee Cadets' which was published in 1906.

Brass bands sponsored by the various Negro lodges were among the leading Negro instrumental music groups. It was the ambition of most of the musicians, young or old, to become a member of one of these bands, as instruction and experience could be obtained by such participation.<sup>30</sup>

Harry Laird Phillips at Sumner was credited in preparing many of the young musicians for performances in these bands.

Most of the instrumental music leaders were connected with these bands and lodges. 'Major' P. L. McElroy organized the Odd Fellows Band around 1913. It has been said that he organized this band in memory of his deceased son and the band was an outlet for his sorrow and loneliness.<sup>31</sup> He secured instruments and music from a local music store and gave these to interested young musicians. He took a personal interest in these young musicians and started some of them on their way to a music career. From this Odd Fellows Band developed many music leaders, some of whom are yet active. Among these are



included:

Dewey Jackson, yet active  
 Andrew Webb, yet active  
 R.Q. Dickerson, leader of the original Cab Calloway  
 orchestra  
 Leonard 'Ham' Davis  
 Eugene Kennedy  
 Lawrence Madison  
 Jerome Pasqual  
 Robert Muse  
 Andrew Brown  
 Norman Langford (another son of P.B. Langford)  
 Sidney Costello  
 James Bennings, yet active  
 Lewis Crenshaw, yet active  
 Winston Walker  
 Charles Lawson

P. B. Langford was the instructor and band master of the Odd Fellows Band and was a tremendous influence on the instrumental musicians. He personally is credited with the development of many of the above named musicians. Dewey Jackson and Andrew Webb began their musical careers under the instructions of P. B. Langford. Dewey Jackson, still considered by many as one of the better jazz trumpet players active today, states that one of the reasons he is able to keep performing after more than 30 years of playing, is by following the advice of P. B. Langford:

"Reserve your strength, get your rest, eat properly, and you will be playing that trumpet for a long time."<sup>32</sup>

Andrew Webb in speaking of Langford stated:

"P. B. Langford was a wonderful teacher with phenomenal ability. He was without a doubt one of the best teachers in this vicinity during his time."<sup>33</sup>



(For further information concerning P.B. Langford see Appendix VI)

Another of these bands was the Pythian Band, sponsored by the Knights of Pythias Lodge. This band was under the leadership of William Blue, and from it came such musicians as:

Nelson Martin - yet active  
Winfield Baker - yet active  
Otto Williams  
Ernest Graham  
Floyd Casey - yet active  
Weedy Harris  
Eddie Allen  
Lonnie Holland  
Theodore Carpenter  
William Bracy

These bands played throughout the city and the surrounding territory for parades, picnics, concerts and other musical affairs.<sup>34</sup>

The dancing schools, which were in operation during the previous period and this period, provided another outlet for the musicians to perform. Many of these musicians performed at the dancing schools, and most of them state this was a valuable experience in the practical development of performing musicians, for at these schools, such dances as the gavotte, the Parisian, the lancers, schottisches, waltz, the cake-walk and other standard dances were common.<sup>35</sup> The dancemaster would call the dances and the musicians had to be alert to keep up. William Blue and his Great Western Band played at Grant's dancing of one of the highlights of his musical career being his



school. Included in this musical group were:

William Blue, trumpet  
 Boisey Franklin, drums  
 Jimmy Wilkinson, Trombone  
 Percy Bibb, clarinet  
 Lem Fields, bass  
 Theodosia Hall, one of the leading female  
 musicians of this time, on piano  
 Charles Scott, horn  
 Mildren Franklin, (wife of Boisey Franklin) on  
 piano  
 Jane Bullock, piano 36

August (Cap) Turner, was director of the band at Luckey's Academy. In his band were such musicians as John Ester, on trumpet; Henry Carter, on trombone; and John Bell. Besides being director, Turner played trumpet.

Another of the leaders during this period was William Hughes, called 'Colonel' Hughes, for no specific reason. Hughes was also connected with the Knights of Pythias Lodge. He had been leader of a drill team that had toured the country and won various honors and banners. He also organized a juvenile band for the lodge. This band consisted of 25 musicians. William Blue was chosen to teach and direct the band. Young musicians were given music instructions on the various instruments, and from this 'Knights of Pythias 'Cadet' Band' developed musicians who have become music leaders. Nelson Martin was one of these who began his musical activities in this band.

During conversation with Nelson Martin, he spoke of one of the highlights of his musical career being his



association with the 350th Field Artillery Band of the U. S. Army during the First World War. He volunteered for service with the Army at the age of 17, and was assigned to the 350 Field Artillery Band, after being brought to New York City. According to Martin, William Blue was contacted to assemble a group of Saint Louis Negro musicians to form the nucleus of a band to be organized for the 350th Field Artillery unit.<sup>37</sup> (The development of the musical movement among the Negroes of Saint Louis, and the calibre of musicians plus their achievements had spread around the country. For this reason, Negro musicians from Saint Louis were sought. William Blue was chosen because of his leadership ability.)

William Blue was unable to get enough of the Saint Louis musicians to volunteer for the army band, and had to go to New York alone. The commanding officer of this, the first Negro artillery group in America, Colonel Austin, later General Austin, appointed Blue as assistant band master.<sup>38</sup> J. Tim Brymn, who had established himself in the east as one of the leading Negro pianists, music arranger, and musical director, was band master.

This band was comprised of about 100 musicians from various sections of the country. There were many competent music teachers attached to the group. William Blue was one of the head teachers.



One of the purposes for the formation of the 350th Field Artillery Band was to give concerts to raise money for a benefit fund for soldiers.

The band was prepared for concerts, marching formations, parades and all types of musical performances, and toured successfully in America before being sent overseas. Concerts were played in such places as Central Park (in New York City) and the Million Dollar Pier (in Atlantic City, N.J.). Traveling with the band were other performers. Among the many concert artists who appeared with the band was Madame Ernestine Schuman-Heink. The band was believed to have been the first Negro band to play such concerts under the direction of a Negro conductor. For many of these concerts, William Blue was conductor.

After touring in the states, the 350th Field Artillery Band was sent to Europe to represent the American Expeditionary Forces and was highly acclaimed in England, Germany, France and other European countries as one of the leading bands in the world.

When the band returned to the United States in 1919, before being inactivated, concerts and parades were played in New York, Philadelphia, Atlantic City and other eastern cities.

James Reece Europe, another Negro director of an Army band that toured Europe, formed a jazz band after returning to the states and successfully toured various



sections of America. The musicians from the 350th band formed the nucleus of this band. This band organized by Europe was one of the first organized jazz bands to make such a tour. William Blue and Nelson Martin were invited to join this band, but both chose to return to Saint Louis. The achievements of the 350th Field Artillery Band added prestige to the Negro musicians of Saint Louis, for the successful musical efforts of William Blue as assistant band master, conductor and teacher, Nelson Martin as a member of a musical unit that was acclaimed as one of the greatest bands in the world, must be considered an achievement.

The musical knowledge and experience obtained from the association with the 350th band by Blue and Martin, was brought back to Saint Louis to further this musical movement.

By the end of this period, the movement of the Negro in Music in Saint Louis had gone through its second stage of development. Many of the present day leaders had either embarked on their musical careers, or were being prepared for future accomplishments. The inspiration, encouragement, and instructions of their predecessors were being realized as new leaders were emerging, and in turn they began to develop others.

The organization of the National Negro Music



In Gerald Tyler, the Negro public schools in Saint Louis had a Negro music supervisor for the first time. Sumner High School had its first Negro music director. This was another important step. The arduous work of Tyler had set a new standard for musical activities in the schools. The community had been aroused musically. Through the efforts of Tyler the public could see and hear what could be accomplished musically in the Negro schools and the community. His achievements inspired others and as a result the Board of Education continued to hire Negro music instructors in the public schools.

In the churches, the work of such pioneers as Angela Dietz Ferguson was continued, for fortunately competent successors were available.

The efforts of private music teachers were beginning to show results, as music leaders were being developed from the instructions obtained from these musicians, and their students were also becoming teachers.

The instrumental music program continued its expansion. Pioneers such as Major P.L. McElroy, Cap Turner, P.B. Langford, and William Blue had set the pace. Their students and associates were carrying on the work they began. New instrumental leaders were beginning their work.

The organization of the National Negro music



Association, Inc., led to the formation of the Saint Louis Chapter, which has been one of the influential music organizations among the Negroes through the years.

The success and development of this movement had spread throughout the country resulting in the coming to Saint Louis of leaders from other sections of the country. They often brought new ideas, their musical experiences and knowledge, also music culture from other parts of the United States which usually proved to be a stimulus to this progressing movement.

The Negro population of Saint Louis was growing, necessitating more schools and churches. The school curriculum was becoming broader, requiring more musical activities and a specific music program. From the inspiration obtained from instrumental and vocal music instructors many inspired musicians sought advanced musical education to help qualify them to teach and perform musically.

#### 1920-1930

The years 1920 to 1930 were chaotic years in the history of the United States and the world, for this period followed the first World War. Many countries were undergoing a period of adjustment with attempts to return to normalcy. This was also an important period for the movement of the Negro in Music in Saint Louis. Some of



the previously mentioned leaders had returned to Saint Louis following their stint with the U.S. Armed Forces, and brought with them musical experiences and knowledge acquired in various sections of the United States and Europe. Among these were William Blue and Nelson Martin.

There was a continuance of Negro musicians moving to Saint Louis and becoming a vital part of this musical movement. Many of the present day music leaders came during this period. Among these was C. Spencer Tocus, former vocal music instructor at the Sumner High School, Stowe Teachers College and Vashon High School which was opened during this period. More recently Tocus was principal of Vashon High School, and is currently principal of Hadley Technical High School. Others include J. Roy Terry, music teacher, organizer of a music school and music leader in the churches of the city; Wirt D. Walton, former vocal music instructor at Sumner High School and Stowe Teachers College, and presently is head of the Music Department at the integrated Harris Teachers College; and Grazia Corneal Barnes, private music teacher, former president of the Saint Louis Music Association and an organist and choral director in the church.

Following the trend of their predecessors, all of these music leaders became affiliated with the music programs of the churches.

A vital factor in the development of this musical



movement was the founding of the Saint Louis Chapter of the National Association of Negro Musicians Inc. during this period. (See pgs. 162-163, and Appendix XI). This affiliation has been an influence toward the development of this movement, and encouragement of young musicians through the years. It may seem to many Saint Louisans that this is purposely a segregated organization because of the limitations of the scope of its activities. In conversation with some of the members, including Kenneth Brown Billups, who is a former vice president of the national body, and presently a member of the board of directors of the parent body, the fact was stressed that the name of the organization, National Association of Negro Musicians, Inc., instills the element of segregation, but the purpose of the group is not to encourage such an undemocratic policy. The main purpose has been to radiate music culture among the Negroes, to influence, promote, and encourage young aspiring musicians and to promote, Negro music. Because of these facts, activities have been more or less limited to Negro churches, schools, and other such public places. Probably these limitations have prevented the organization from achieving the local and national prominence it desires. Among those of another ethnic group who have become associated with the Saint Louis Chapter are Marie Weinrich and Dorothy Noble Lord.

As a result of the efforts of such individuals



as August 'Cap' Turner, P. B. Langford, William Blue and James H. Harris II, the instrumental music program had become an important phase of music among the Negroes.

In the field of education this period was an important one, for in 1929 Vashon High School was opened to Negro children. This afforded extended educational facilities for the growing Negro population. Sumner High School accommodated students in the western section of the city, and the Vashon High School accommodated the students in the eastern section, with Grand Avenue as the dividing line. With the two high schools in operation, the need for additional music instructors, along with teachers of other subjects in the school curriculum, became apparent and gave an incentive for ambitious musicians.

Poro College, opened in 1918, became a music center during this period. Mrs. Annie M. Malone, the founder, provided opportunities for ambitious musicians with her sincere efforts. The building provided ample facilities for musical performances, and many of the affairs formerly held at the various churches in the city were now being presented at Poro College. (Refer to P. **202** for more details concerning Poro College.)

Bennie Parks Easter came to Saint Louis during



this period also, and soon became one of the prominent piano teachers in the area. She is another of the migrants to Saint Louis with an advanced educational background having been educated at the Prairie View State College in Texas, and the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. She also attended the Emporia State College in Kansas where she studied under Gladys Hawkins, who was a pupil of Theodore Leschitzky, noted piano teacher.<sup>39</sup> With this background, Mrs. Easter began her work in Saint Louis, concentrating her musical efforts on students of the piano. According to Mrs. Easter, she still uses techniques and mechanisms acquired from the New England Conservatory. One of her most successful pupils was her daughter La Vada Easter, who developed into a prominent piano soloist and musicologist.<sup>40</sup>

#### The Saint Louis Music Association

One of the most influential organizations in the development of musical culture among the Negroes of Saint Louis is the Saint Louis Music Association. This Saint Louis affiliate of the National Association of Negro Musicians, Inc. was founded in 1921, with its aim:

"To foster and develop Negro music in Saint Louis and abroad, together with a higher appreciation of music in general."<sup>41</sup>

From the constitution of this organization comes the following:



"The name of this, the local branch of the National Association of Negro Musicians, shall be the Saint Louis Music Association.

Its object shall be: -

First: To promote the study of music among Negroes by encouraging and supporting students and artists (both local and intinerant), including choirs, orchestras and other musical organizations, and to foster fellowship and friendly rivalry among such students and artists.

Second: To create a demand for worthy compositions by Negroes, including our folk songs and to urge their proper rendition.

Third: To stimulate and educate the Negro public in the appreciation of the best in music."<sup>42</sup>

(For detailed historical data of the Saint Louis Music Association see Appendix XI)

Throughout the early years of this organization various programs and demonstrations were held. In 1925 chorus rehearsals were held every Tuesday except holidays, and lectures on voice were held once a month. Antonio Haskell was the director.<sup>43</sup>

Orchestra rehearsals were held every Wednesday under the direction of Cecil White, who is credited as being one of the first music arrangers for dance orchestras in the city.<sup>44</sup>

Piano study clubs were held on the second Tuesday in each month under the direction of Myrtle Burgess.

Such nationally known artists as R. Nathaniel Dett, pianist, Clarence Cameron White, violinist, Marian



Anderson, Alexander Parks, tenor, Roland Hayes, and Ernest Kroeger, pianist associated with the Kroeger School of Music, were presented in concert by this organization. Marian Anderson's first appearance in Saint Louis was under the sponsorship of the Saint Louis Music Association.<sup>45</sup>

Through the years, the musical activities of this organization have continued. Scholarships have been presented annually to aspiring and talented Negro musicians. Monthly local programs have been presented featuring young musical talent, and musical forums have been held frequently. Members of the Saint Louis Chapter have been elected as officers in the parent organization and this has added prestige to Saint Louis and this musical movement. Clarence Hayden Wilson was president from 1941 until 1951. Mabel Story and Grazia Corneal Barnes have been officials in the parent body, and as previously mentioned, Kenneth Brown Billups has been vice president and is currently a board member. (The National meeting for 1959 will be held in Saint Louis.)

#### Music Leaders in the Schools

During the era of J. Gerald Tyler, the music in the Negro schools of Saint Louis reached a level not before realized. The standard was set for his successors. Following Tyler at Sumner High School was Ulysses Chambers, who took advantage of the program developed by Tyler and



kept it going. After his stay at Sumner, Chambres went to New York and continued his music activities as musical director of musical shows.<sup>46</sup>

Mabel Story was music director at Marshall Elementary School from 1924 to 1925.<sup>47</sup> Her work was significant because supervised musical instruction was being offered in the Negro elementary schools for the first time, and thus students were being prepared for more advanced musical activities in the high schools. She succeeded Chambres as head of the Music Department at Sumner High School in 1926. When Vashon High School was opened for the Negro students in 1927, Mabel Story was selected to be music instructor there along with Eugene S. Perry.<sup>48</sup>

Also coming to Vashon High School during this period was Otto Bohanon. Bohanon, composer of the Vashon School Song, 'Vashon We Love', was head of the music department at Vashon from 1928 to 1930. He was said to have been a well-schooled musician and his work at Vashon was highly commended.

With these capable music leaders at Vashon High School, the students and the community in this section of Saint Louis were given the same cultural boost already enjoyed at Sumner.



musical Clarence Spencer Tocus -

contributed Clarence Spencer Tocus succeeded Mabel Story as head of the music department at Sumner in 1927.<sup>49</sup> Tocus came to Saint Louis from the Sumner College in Parkersburg, West Virginia where he had attained some recognition as a choral director. The arrival of Tocus in Saint Louis was the beginning of the migration of the present day Negro music leaders to Saint Louis who became associated with the schools and the churches. Although Willette Jeffries Haley preceeded Tocus to Saint Louis, in consideration of time of service in the Saint Louis Public School system, Tocus is more often considered the first of these migrants. He was another of the music leaders who came to Saint Louis with a rich educational and musical background.<sup>50</sup>

When asked why he chose to come to Saint Louis instead of returning to Howard University where he previously served as piano instructor, or accepting other positions offered, Tocus replied:

"I was looking for a place where I could make a more substantial contribution to my race. I felt that the mere teaching of piano was not enough. I wished to become more of an educator than a musician. So after looking the field over, I applied for a position in the Sumner High School in Saint Louis. I was accepted and here I am. Never have I regretted the move."<sup>51</sup>

With these thoughts in mind, Tocus soon established himself as another important figure in this



musical movement. His ambition to make a substantial contribution has been more than realized. In the school system he became an influence, a music leader and another source of inspiration. He continued the work of Tyler and set standards for his successors. His choral groups made appearances in and around Saint Louis along with the many school programs. In 1943 he retired from duties as a music instructor in the public schools of Saint Louis, and became an administrator. He was Assistant principal of Vashon High School from 1943 to 1955. He became principal in 1955 when A. G. Mosely retired. Presently Tocus is principal of Hadley Technical High School a position he has held since 1957.

#### Wirt D. Walton -

Another of the present day music leaders who came to Saint Louis during this period was Wirt D. Walton. He came here to visit his sister, Nan Walton, who was a teacher at Sumner High School. During this visit Walton applied for a position in the music department at Sumner, after first applying for a job as music instructor in the public schools of East Saint Louis, Illinois. As Tocus was dividing his time between Sumner and the newly opened Stowe Teachers College, there was an opening in the music department at Sumner High School, and Walton was given



this position in 1929. Fortunately he was prepared educationally and musically to take advantage of this opportunity.<sup>52</sup>

The coming of Walton to Saint Louis was also a beneficial venture, for he became a part of this musical movement. He is credited with introducing a boys and girls glee club to the music program of Sumner. These groups were brought together and Walton formed what was considered the first a cappella choir in the Saint Louis Public School System.<sup>53</sup> Attending the first concert of this choir was the late John Rush Powell, assistant superintendent of the public schools then, along with other music and civic dignitaries. Powell reported to the superintendent of this 'different type' vocal group which performed with no piano accompaniment. This choir from Sumner was sent to various other high schools in the city to give concerts. This was the beginning of a cappella choirs in the Saint Louis Public School System, as others were formed soon after.<sup>54</sup>

#### Private Music Teacher

J. Roy Terry -

Among other migrants to Saint Louis during this period was J. Roy Terry, who came here in 1927 after successful musical activities in Dayton, Ohio and New York City.<sup>55</sup> Terry became an immediate addition to the already prominent music leaders in Saint Louis. He was a competent



organist, pianist and private music teacher.

During an interview Terry related:

"When I came to Saint Louis, there seemed to have been a growth of music here among the Negroes. This began with the rise of Negro music, and the importance of newer musicians as C. Spencer Tocus. This growth was fostered through the efforts of the Saint Louis Music Association."<sup>56</sup>

Terry also discussed the fact that he met some of the leading musicians in Saint Louis as musical director of the Gospel Feast Party which traveled with the evangelist Reverend J. Wilson Becton. This group made frequent appearances in Saint Louis at various Negro churches.<sup>57</sup>

Terry, who was pianist and organist with Becton's religious services, ceased this association in 1927 to make Saint Louis his home. His first move was to establish a music studio in the Peoples Finance Building on the corner of Jefferson and Market street. This proved to be a very profitable venture, for soon J. Roy Terry was considered one of the leading Negro music teachers in the city. As the number of students increased, Terry hired additional teachers to assist him. This eventually led to the establishment of the J. Roy Terry School of Music. As the school continued to grow, Terry moved farther west to larger quarters at 1040a N. Vandeventer, and his present staff consists of six teachers, instructing in all phases of music. Terry is another of the musicians who came to Saint Louis with an impressive musical background.<sup>58</sup>



He has continued his musical activities through the years. He has served as teacher, pianist, organist, conductor, accompanist and lecturer.

Besides his work as teacher and other capacities mentioned, Terry is also a composer. Among his compositions are included pieces for organ, chorus, voice and piano, a symphonic poem entitled 'Afro American Symphonic Poem', a concerto for organ and orchestra, a Concerto in A Major for organ in three movements, a mass, 'All Saints Mass', dedicated to Father Clark (former pastor of All Saints Episcopal Church), a Fantasie on Negro Themes for three pianos, a Fugue for piano and strings, and other miscellaneous pieces.<sup>59</sup>

Among his other accomplishments was election to office of president of the Saint Louis Music Association, and later to office of Vice President of the parent body the National Negro Music Association, Inc.,

#### Instrumental Music

Most of the instrumental leaders of the previous period were very active during this period. James H. Harris II, was continuing his activities as music teacher, concert violinist and band director.<sup>60</sup> The Odd Fellows Band was still considered one of the better musical groups performing in the city. This band under the capable leadership of P.B. Langford continued to play in and around Saint Louis. Andrew Webb assisted Langford



and eventually succeeded him as band leader. Dewey Jackson, who received much of his early training and experience in this band developed into one of the leading jazz trumpet players in this era. (See Chapter **VI** P. 326)

When William Blue and Nelson Martin returned to Saint Louis after their association with the 350th Field Artillery Band, they resumed their musical activities in Saint Louis.

William Blue organized a band composed of members of Local No. 44, the Saint Louis Negro affiliate with the American Federation of Musicians, which included such musicians as James H. Harris II, Steve Adams, Eugene McDonald, Edward McKinnie and Harvey Langford. This band performed for parades, picnics and various other musical affairs.<sup>61</sup>

Another of the cultural efforts of Mrs. Malone of Poro College was the sponsorship of a Negro Concert Orchestra under the directorship of Cecil White, another competent musician during this period. This musical organization was of the symphony type. Mrs. Malone financed this orchestra which represented Poro College, and the group appeared in concert at Poro College and at other places in Saint Louis. Included in the orchestra were James H. Harris II, Bud Jenkins, solo trumpet player, Avery White, brother of Cecil White, Artie Mosby Sr.



(violinist), Nelson Martin and David Grant, (Cellists).

Tocus, re Martin commented on the valuable efforts of Mrs. Malone for the cultivation of good music in the community.

### Music in the Churches

As previously mentioned, the music leaders in this period followed the pattern set by the pioneers. They too were a part of the music activities in the schools, the community and in the churches. Grazia Corneal Barnes, became organist at Central Baptist Church, where Mary V. Mack remained as choir director. J. Roy Terry succeeded her as organist at Central. C. Spencer Tocus became organist at the All Saints Episcopal Church succeeding Myrtle Burgess. Antonio Haskell became director of music at the Galilee Baptist Church. Besides his efforts as music director, Haskell appeared often as concert soloist, and instructed on piano, organ and voice.

As such competent musicians were coming to Saint Louis and becoming active in the various churches, the music in the churches continued to keep pace with the standard religious music available.

Although religious music of such European composers as Handel, Bach, Schubert and Mozart was programmed, the Negro spirituals were still predominantly used by the musical directors. Adaptations of the



spirituals by such musicians as Haskell, Terry and Tocus, retained the beauty and sincerity of these Negro folk songs.

Poro College - Annie M. Malone

Mrs. Annie Mae Malone, founder of the Poro Beauty Culture System, proved to be a patron of the fine arts in the city of Saint Louis. She has often been singled out as the one person who contributed more towards the encouragement of culture among the Negroes of Saint Louis than any other individual. When she moved her business activities to the location at 4300 St. Ferdinand Avenue in 1918, Poro College, as the building was named, became not only a business but also a center of culture. The Poro Corner, as the intersection in front of the building at St. Ferdinand and Pendleton Avenue was called, became a prominent location. Many of the musical affairs formerly held in the churches in the community were now being held at Poro College. Mrs. Malone planned her building so as to afford accommodations for such events. Being a music lover and an admirer of the fine arts and drama, Mrs. Malone was anxious to do what she could to further the musical movement among the Negroes of Saint Louis. From 1918 to 1930, many of the leading international Negro artists appeared in concert at Poro College either in the auditorium or on the roof garden. Included



among these artists were Marian Anderson, who appeared at Poro College for her first Saint Louis concert, Clarence Cameron White, Anita Patti Brown, Mrs. A. C. Bilbrew, who is credited with organizing the first all Negro chorus to appear in the movies, Florence Cole Talbert, and George Garner. Mrs. Malone also served as hostess to many Negro artists who appeared in Saint Louis. Among these were Roland Hayes, who made his first Saint Louis appearance at the American Theatre during this period; Paul Robeson, Louise Beavers and Hattie McDaniels. These celebrities were entertained at Poro College by luncheons, parties and other social affairs.<sup>62</sup>

Mrs. Malone encouraged musical activities among her employees, and in the community. Observance of morning devotions was a regular practice at Poro College. Hymns of all churches were sung, and talented students sang solos and performed on instruments. James H. Harris was encouraged by Mrs. Malone to organize an orchestra among the women associated with Poro College. In 1925, Harris organized this 26 piece orchestra of Poro College personnel for performances at Poro and for affairs in and around Saint Louis. The group also appeared in New York, Philadelphia, Pa., Boston, Mass., and Washington, D.C. on its first concert tour. Later the orchestra appeared in Cleveland, Ohio, Youngstown, Ohio, Steubenville, Ohio,

Malone founded in a frame shack in Lovejoy, Illinois in



Kansas City, Missouri, Terre Haute, Indiana, Louisville, Kentucky, and Chicago, Illinois.

Mrs. Malone also secured the services of Zella Cole Hunton to assist in musical activities and to discover and direct amateur talent for the weekly amateur hour program held at Poro.

During this period, the auditorium at Poro College was changed to a motion picture house and named the 'Amytis Theatre'. Live musical talent was also presented at the Amytis Theatre. Abbie Mitchell, well known performer in the musical comedy idiom, was the first to appear in person at the Amytis Theatre.<sup>64</sup> Also among the first performers to appear there was Eddie South, called the 'Dark Angel of the Violin'.

When Annie Malone moved her business enterprise to Chicago in 1930, a big blow was felt by many who had participated in musical activities at Poro College, those encouraged by her, and the many culture conscious citizens of Saint Louis.

Although Mrs. Malone, before her death in 1957, was a resident of Chicago, Illinois and Poro College no longer exists as a culture center, the name of Annie M. Malone is yet inscribed on the roll of honor and achievement in Saint Louis.

The Poro Beauty Culture System which Annie M. Malone founded in a frame shack in Lovejoy, Illinois in



1900 and built into a million dollar enterprise is still in practice here and throughout the United States. The Annie Malone Childrens Home for orphans, for which she was the chief benefactor, remains in Saint Louis. Each May a celebration is held at the home after a long parade in which the leading Negro social organizations and marching bands participate. Annie Malone and her husband, Aaron Malone, gave \$10,000 for the lot upon which the home was built.

Another of the civic activities of Mrs. Malone was the donation of the first maternity ward for Negro women at Barnes Hospital.<sup>65</sup>

#### John William Boone - Blind Boone (1864-1927)

There were many traveling musicians who came through Saint Louis during this period and appeared in concert and gave recitals. Among these was John William Boone, professionally known as 'Blind Boone'.

Boone was a native Missourian, having been born in Warrensburg, Missouri on May 17, 1864. His achievements as a concert pianist and musical entertainer were well thought of, according to information obtained from various periodicals and through interviews with individuals who had either heard him in person, or had heard of him during his active period. It is unfortunate that recordings were not made of his playing so his music could



still be heard and enjoyed.

It has been said that Boone lost his sight at the age of six months. When quite young he was given his first musical instrument, a tin whistle, on which he soon learned many ordinary tunes. His next instrument was a mouth organ, and at the age of six, he organized a boys mouth organ group.<sup>66</sup>

When Boone was first introduced to the piano, he knew this was the instrument he wanted to perform on. At the age of 17 he began an association with John Lang of Columbia, Missouri who became his manager. Lang arranged for technical training for Boone, and soon he learned compositions in the standard piano repertory which he featured at his concerts. It has been said that Boone developed such a well-trained ear, that he could reproduce the most difficult cadenzas, and the most involved series of chord progressions at 1 or 2 hearings.<sup>67</sup>

Under the management of Lang, Boone traveled extensively. The relationship between Lang and Boone lasted almost forty years and resulted in financial success for both of them. Lang considered Boone to be one of the greatest musical entertainers in the world, and this admiration was a great factor in the successful ventures of the two.

Boone retired from his activities as a traveling musician in 1927, giving his last concert in Virden,



Illinois. Later that year he died.

He made many appearances in Saint Louis as a performer. Julia Davis, I. Pearl Sexton, and Mabel Story have told me that his performances were well attended and enjoyed here in Saint Louis.

It has been written that the strenuous performance schedule of 'Blind Boone' which lasted almost forty years often extended over ten months of the year with as many as six concerts per week.<sup>68</sup>

#### Conclusion of the Period

By the end of this period, the movement of the Negro in Saint Louis had gone through its third stage of development. The value of this period to this movement is apparent for during these years, many of the present day music leaders came to Saint Louis. Sumner High School, which had the distinction of presenting to the public the first a cappella choir composed of students from one of the public schools, reached another milestone in accomplishment.

With the opening of the Vashon High School, and the employment of competent teachers specializing in music instruction and musical activities, the incentive for further study became more prevalent among other aspiring musicians.

The pioneers yet living had the pleasure of



seeing their students and associates carrying on their work and achieving in the field of music.

The organizing of the Saint Louis Music Association was another source of contact and fraternization for the musicians. Also the appearance in Saint Louis of internationally known Negro musicians proved to be inspiring to others to continue their studying and preparation.

5. From information obtained from Julia Davis during an interview.
6. According to information obtained from Zella Cole Huston during interview.
7. In most periodicals, Tyler is listed as a Saint Louis musician.
8. Opberlin College Song Book  
5th Revised Edition, pp. 164. Published by the Alumni Association of Oberlin College.
9. Haro, Maud Cuney.  
Negro Musicians and their Music  
Associated Publishers, Inc., Washington, D.C.  
1936.
10. Information from questionnaire sent out by Ernst Krohn in 1921. Op. Cit. No. 3.
11. Ibid.
12. Statement made during interview 10/19/55.
13. Statement made during interview 12/17/55.
14. Statement made during interview 12/18/55.
15. Statement made during interview 10/5/55.



## FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER III

1. According to information obtained from Miss Myrtle Burgee during an interview on 8/24/55
2. From information obtained from Julia Davis, Myrtle Burgess and Percy Bill.
3. From information obtained from questionnaire sent out by and returned to Ernst Krohn in 1921 to music leaders in Missouri as preparation for the writing of his book 'A Century of Missouri Music'.
4. From information obtained from Zella Cole Hunton during an interview 10/18/55
5. From information obtained from Julia Davis during an interview
6. According to information obtained from Zella Cole Hunton during interview.
7. In most periodicals, Tyler is listed as a Saint Louis musician.
8. Oberlin College Song Book  
8th Revised Edition, pg. 16. Published by the Alumni Association of Oberlin College
9. Hare, Maud Cuney  
Negro Musicians and their Music  
Associated Publishers, Inc. Washington, D.C. 1936
10. Information from questionnaire sent out by Ernst Krohn in 1921. Op. Cit. No. 3
11. Ibid
12. Statement made during interview 10/19/55
13. Statement made during interview 10/17/55
14. Statement made during interview 10/18/55
15. Statement made during interview 10/5/55



16. Statement made during interview 9/29/55
17. These individuals were chosen to make statements concerning Gerald Tyler because of their close relationship with him, and the fact that they have continued their community leadership through the years, each achieving in his chosen field.
18. Information received from Edward Hamilton during interview on 10/5/57
19. Ibid
- 20.a Poro College will be discussed on Pages 202-205
- 20.b Information obtained from Dr. Harris during interview October 17, 1955.
21. See Appendix for newspaper article extolling activities of Josephine Curtis in South Bend, Indiana.
22. Interview with Willette Jeffries Haley 12/25/55
23. Interview with Eliza Ellsford 3/6/56
24. Ibid
25. Information from questionnaire sent to various churches in 1956 seeking information concerning their music directors and activities through the years.
26. Ibid
27. Information obtained from Lewis Crenshaw and Winston Walker during interview.
28. According to information obtained from Eddie McKinnie, Dewey Kackson and Lewis Crenshaw during interviews.
29. Ibid
30. From information obtained from many of the musicians who performed during these years.
31. According to information obtained from interview with Andrew Webb on 4/11/56



32. Interview with Dewey Jackson 12/12/54
33. Interview with Andrew Webb 12/13/54
34. From information obtained from Nelson Martin.
35. Information obtained from Percy Bibb during interview.
36. Information obtained from Percy Bibb
37. Incidentally this procedure was repeated during the Second World War when musicians from Saint Louis were sought to form the nucleus of band to be stationed at Great Lakes Naval Base. Len Bowden a Saint Louisan, was director of the Band. Many Saint Louis musicians volunteered for this band and remained at Great Lakes until their time of service was up.
38. Information obtained during interview with Nelson Martin.
39. Information obtained during interview with Bennie Parks Easter on 4/22/56
40. La Vada Easter will be discussed fully in Chapter **V**.
41. Information from Saint Louis Music Association Yearbook 1925-26 in possession of Edward Hamilton.
42. Ibid
43. Antonio Haskell was one of the leading organists, choral directors and music leaders of this period. Many of his compositions are still being used in Negro churches in the city.
44. According to information obtained from Walter Stanley, pioneer jazz musician.
45. According to information obtained from Edward Hamilton during interview.
46. Information from Thelma Lewis, who was a student at Sumner during the stay of Chambres.
47. Information obtained from the Directory of the Saint Louis Public Schools, Board of Education, Saint Louis, Missouri



48. Ibid
49. Ibid
50. C. Spencer Tocus graduated from Ohio University with three degrees including a B.A. in English, B.A. in Music and a B.S. in Education. He also has extensive piano study and choral music instruction.
51. From News article which appeared in May 15, 1931 edition of the Saint Louis Argus, taken from a story of the music career of Tocus which appeared in a previous edition of the Saint Louis Globe Democrat.
52. Wirt D. Walton was educated at the Kansas State College, and had previous teaching experience at Virginia State College in Petersburg, Virginia, where he worked with the music department and was head of the animal husbandry department.
53. According to information obtained during interview with Wirt D. Walton 3/12/54
54. For history of Sumner High School A Cappella Choir, see Appendix XII
55. While in Dayton, Terry played organ at the commencement exercises at Wilberforce University for several years. He was offered the position as head of the music department there.
56. Information obtained during interview with J. Roy Terry 2/10/55
57. The Gospel Feast Party traveling with Reverend Becton included a pianist, organist and an orchestra consisting of musicians from New York. I attended many of these religious meetings. The musicians played a prominent part in these services which were carefully organized. The choice of songs and the spotting of the musical selections throughout the services provided an incentive to keep the congregation enthused and inspired. Rev. Becton was very distinctively dressed and had an extensive wardrobe. He would often make a dramatic appearance on the rostrum with full evening dress including frock coat, vest.



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gamble striped pants, which were very popular then, patent leather shoes, spats and a cape. As he would approach the pulpit he would throw off his cape, which would be caught by his valet. He often wore large diamond rings and diamond stick pins.

The orchestra composed of about ten musicians seemed to have been comprised of competent musicians. Some of the order of service introduced by Rev. Becton, such as the consecrated dime, are still practiced in many of the Negro churches. His appearances were successful both financially and religiously for during his series of meetings, there were many converts in the various churches.

58. Terry received a Bachelors degree from Chicago Musical College and Masters degree from Northwestern University and is currently working on a doctorate.
59. For sample of works by Terry, See Appendix XIII
60. For account of life and musical activities of James H. Harris II see Appendix VII
61. According to information received from Nelson Martin during interview. See Appendix XXXI for details concerning Local No. 44.
62. According to information obtained from Mrs. Annie M. Keaton, Director of Saint Louis Poro Beauty Culture College
63. From manuscript autobiography of James H. Harris II obtained from Mrs. James Harris after his death.
64. Refer to page for discussion of Abbie Mitchell.
65. Information from souvenir program of Ninth Annual Convention of the National Poro Association, Inc. held in Memphis, Tennessee.
66. Information obtained during interview with Josephine Briscoe, cousin of Blaine Boone. She had in her possession extensive information concerning John William 'Blind' Boone.
67. Ibid



## CHAPTER IV

### THE NEGRO IN MUSIC IN SAINT LOUIS 1930-1950

#### The Expansion Period 1930-1940

The period from 1930 to 1940 was a very important part of my life, for during these years I received my high school education at Sumner High School where I was a member of the Boys Glee Club and the then newly organized A Cappella Choir under the capable direction of Wirt D. Walton. This gave me my first acquaintance with music of many of the Negro composers as well as with works and arrangements of other American and European musicians and my first association with an organized musical group.

This period was another vital one in the movement of the Negro in Music in Saint Louis, for during these years Major N. Clark Smith came to Sumner High School as the first Negro to be employed by the Saint Louis Board of Education in the capacity of instrumental music instructor and band director.<sup>1</sup> Before, instrumental music instruction was limited, for there was no Negro instrumental specialist in the Saint Louis Public School System. The instructions and activities in instrumental music were carried out entirely by volunteer musicians. With the addition of an instrumental music program, the music curriculum was standardized at Sumner High School and soon after the same type of musical program was instituted at Vashon High School.



Among other Negro musicians who came to Saint Louis during this period were Clarence Hayden Wilson, who became vocal music instructor at Vashon High School and Stanley Lee Henderson who followed Major Smith at Sumner High School.

The Peoples Symphony Orchestra was organized during this period under the conductorship and musical direction of Abram McClenney. This group was the first Negro Symphony orchestra in Saint Louis which was community sponsored. An orchestra organized previously under the direction of Cecil White sponsored by Annie M. Malone, was formed to represent Poro College and was more or less an individual project. The Peoples Symphony Orchestra was under the management of such civic leaders as Dr. Herman Dreer, then assistant principal of Sumner High School, Z. D. Lenoir, educator, and Edward Hamilton, then principal at Simmons Elementary School.

Another civic project that had its inception during this period was the 'Y Circus' sponsored by the Pine Street Y.M.C.A. This was an annual musical presentation which afforded local amateur musical talent an opportunity for performance. The various high schools provided most of the amateur talent presented. Professional talent of national and international fame was also presented as part of this musical program. Many well known performers made their first public appearance during presentations of the Y Circus.



The presentation of Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio 'Elijah' under the musical direction of C. Spencer Tocus, was another remarkable musical event of this period. Out of town and local talent of note were featured in this production.

In keeping with the tradition of this musical movement, the music leaders in the schools and community were very active in the music programs of the churches.

The Saint Louis Music Association continued its musical activities and remained an influence in the development of musicians and continued radiation of music culture in the community. Most of the music leaders and music lovers were associated with this organization.

#### Music in the Schools

Major N. Clark Smith -

With the vocal music program established in the Negro high schools of Saint Louis, and some type of instrumental music activities having been introduced, all that was needed to standardize the music curriculum was a specialized instrumental music instructor, and an instrumental music program. These problems were partly solved in 1931 when Major N. Clark Smith came to Saint Louis to be employed at Sumner High School as band director and instrumental music instructor. Smith was another of the Negro musicians brought to Saint Louis qualified for the position in which he was to serve. He had previous



musical experience in the U.S. Army as band director of the 8th Illinois National Guard Band for a period of ten years. He also was band instructor at Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama.<sup>2</sup> Major Smith received his formal music education at the University of Kansas and at the Chicago Musical College.<sup>3</sup>

When he came to Saint Louis, Major Smith brought many of his own instruments to Sumner High School for the use of the students as he was aware of the task ahead of him in the organization of a band.

Besides his activities with the band and as instrumental music instructor, Smith also organized a special vocal group choosing the better singers from the glee clubs and the choir at Sumner. This group was prepared for concert work at the school and at other public places in and around Saint Louis. One of the highlight appearances of this group was as a feature attraction on a coast to coast broadcast over the Columbia Broadcasting Company (originating over Station KMOX, Saint Louis) under the sponsorship of the Pevely Dairy Company, for a period of three months.<sup>4</sup> Among other appearances of this vocal group was in one of the Municipal Opera's productions of 'Showboat', and also as a feature attraction in stage productions at the Fox Theatre in Saint Louis.<sup>5</sup>

Among the soloists in this group were Lavern Hutcherson, who has appeared as 'Porgy' in the road show 'Porgy and Bess', Jesselyn Coleman, a high school student



considered a promising soprano soloist during this period, and Jewell Belle, currently a prominent singer in many of the leading night clubs in this section of the country.

In speaking of Major Smith, Jewell Belle says:

"Major Smith to me was an accomplished musician, and exceptionally good in handling people and getting results. His teaching and instructing is something hard to forget because of the results he obtained. He was very influential with his musical efforts and the possessor of a dynamic personality. I credit much of my success to Major Smith."<sup>6</sup>

According to many Saint Louisans contacted, the four years Major Smith spent at Sumner High School set a standard for others to follow. As stated by Willette Jeffries Haley:

"Major Smith was one of the greatest influences on the band music program in the Negro high schools of Saint Louis."<sup>7</sup>

Clarence Hayden Wilson -

Continuing the immigration to Saint Louis of capable Negro musicians, Clarence Hayden Wilson came in 1930 to be employed at The Vashon High School as vocal music instructor.<sup>8</sup> He had previously been music instructor at Tennessee State College in Nashville, Tennessee from 1926 until 1930. He composed music for the Tennessee State College Alma Mater.

Wilson has proven through the years his value to the music program among the Negroes in Saint Louis. After staying at Vashon for ten years as vocal music



instructor, Wilson was transferred to Sumner High School to serve as instrumental music instructor and band director, a position he still holds.

While at Vashon, Wilson presented the vocal groups in many concerts. Among his other activities were presentations of operettas, and various seasonal musical programs.

Stanley Lee Henderson -

When Major Smith left Sumner High School in 1935, he was replaced by Stanley Lee Henderson who came to Saint Louis from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In Milwaukee, Henderson was band director and in charge of the choral music program at the Benedict High School there.<sup>9</sup>

Henderson continued the work begun by Major Smith and taught band, orchestra and chorus at Sumner High School. In 1938, Henderson became president of the Negro Music Educators Association of Missouri. This organization with its headquarters at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, was formed to encourage music education in the Negro high schools of Missouri, and also to promote music festivals and other such musical events in the Negro schools of the state.<sup>10</sup> According to Henderson, this organization has been instrumental in the development of music programs in many of the Negro high schools throughout the state.



~~saxopho~~ Henderson, who was transferred from Sumner to Vashon High School, is presently employed at the recently integrated Soldan High School as instructor of instrumental music. ~~currently employed in the school systems of the~~

~~Saint~~ The contributions of Clarence Hayden Wilson and Stanley Lee Henderson have been particularly valuable since, until recently, Sumner and Vashon were the only public high schools in Saint Louis for Negro students. Many of the present day leaders in the various phases of music received valuable musical instructions while high school students in musical groups headed by either Wilson or Henderson. Among these are Clark Terry, one of the leading jazz trumpet players, (See p. **360**), the Four Vagabonds, vocal quartet who were featured for years over a coast to coast radio program (See p. **233**), Walter Ray, employed currently in the public school system of Saint Louis, and one of the leading piano performers in the jazz field, Walter Bell, who is currently a prominent vocal music arranger in Chicago, all of whom attended Vashon High School while Wilson was music instructor; Ernie Wilkins, now one of the leading instrumental music arrangers in the popular music field (See p. **361**), James 'Jimmy' Forrest, tenor saxophone stylist, and popular music composer, whose recording of his 'Night Train' became a favorite, Wendell Marshall, bass viol performer with many of the leading jazz musicians, (See p. **358**), Oliver Nelson, one of the leading



saxophone stylists and arrangers in the jazz circle of Saint Louis, Ernest and Vernon Nashville, both very prominent in the jazz orchestra field in Saint Louis, and both currently employed in the school systems of the Saint Louis area, and Ollie Wilson, recent addition to the Saint Louis Philharmonic Orchestra.

As the music program was broadened in the schools of Saint Louis, the need for a music instructor at Stowe Teachers College became apparent. C. Spencer Tocus was chosen for this position.

Another of the leaders in the music of the churches who Music in the Churches period was James Tandy. After

Continuing the procedure of their predecessors, the music leaders of this period became associated with the various churches shortly after their arrival in Saint Louis. Major Smith became choir director at Saint James A.M.E. Church, and presented many of his compositions and choral arrangements during the services. Stanley Lee Henderson followed Major Smith at Saint James and later served for four years as choir director and organist at the Centennial Christian Church, and is presently music director and choir master at the Berean Seven Day Adventist Church.

Clarence Hayden Wilson became director of the choir at the Berean Presbyterian Church around 1931, and he still holds this position. Annually Wilson has presented there are always individuals who never achieve the acclaim



one of the standard religious musical works as a feature at the church. Throughout the years Wilson had been credited with the perpetuation of oratorio works as a community feature with his choir from the Berea Church. Among the oratorios presented are included:

Elijah	Mendelssohn
Prodigal Son	Sullivan
Seven Last Words	Dubois
Prodigal Son	Vincent
Messiah	Handel
Christmas Oratorio	Saint Saens
Requiem	Verdi
Requiem	Brahms
St. Cecelia Mass	Gounod

Another of the leaders in the music of the churches who was prominent during this period was Amos Tandy. After serving as assistant organist at Central Baptist Church while Terry was organist, Tandy soon became head organist there. He also was one of the instructors at the J. Roy Terry School of Music.

Lawrence Pierre, formerly organist with the Gospel Feast Party which traveled with Reverend Becton, returned to Saint Louis and was considered among the leading organists in this area associated with the church. He served in this capacity at Central Baptist Church for a short while, and was featured at many of the churches in the area in concert.

Clarence Norman -

In this movement, as well as any such projects, endeavors and work of Kenneth Brown Billups makes Norman there are always individuals who never achieve the acclaim



of others but who are important to its development.

Such an individual is Clarence Norman, to whom Kenneth Brown Billups, one of the current music leaders who will be discussed fully in the next chapter, credits a great deal of his success in music. Norman interested Billups while he, Billups, was a high school student. Billups began harmonizing in one of the groups headed by Norman, and this association gave him aspiration of becoming a musician. Norman also was a source of encouragement for Billups and other interested youngsters. This group, under the leadership of Norman, rehearsed in the dining room of Poro College.

Norman took a great interest in working with youngsters, and did much in his efforts to keep these interested boys out of trouble, as much of their extra time was spent with Norman in rehearsals.

Norman was not considered a learned musician, but he had the ability to inspire others, and by his methods he obtained results and kept up the interest of his associates. He was good for community relations because of his work with the young boys in the neighborhood.

Norman was also director of the Saint James A.M.E. church choir.

Although the musical efforts of Norman as an individual may be forgotten by many, the continued successful endeavors and work of Kenneth Brown Billups makes Norman



an important part of this musical movement.

### The Peoples Symphony Orchestra

In 1931 Abram McClenney, a graduate of Sumner High School in 1921, organized an orchestra of Negro musicians which was known as the Peoples Symphony Orchestra. This orchestra was so named because it was to be supported by the community. This was another example of the attempt of the Negro musicians to present to the public an organized musical group performing what may be called the 'better class' of music. Because of the limited musical opportunities and training, it is not to be construed that this orchestra compared with any of the top symphonies of the area, but it is to be considered an accomplishment to undertake such a task under such adverse musical conditions, a common factor during this stage of the development of this movement. It again shows the desire and foresight of some of the music leaders.

According to McClenney, his inspiration for the organization of such a musical organization was the Negro symphony orchestras he had heard in the eastern section of the United States while he was attending the New England Conservatory of Music, and touring as a concert violinist. McClenney majored on violin at the Conservatory and gave concerts in Boston, Cincinnati, and Chicago among other cities.

James H. Harris	Tanner Stafford	Leonard Taylor
Robert Osborne	Thelma Johnson	Joseph Spotts
Clifford Douglas	Roges Freeman	Artie Mosby



When the task of organizing this orchestra was undertaken, McClenney was 21 years old. He sought the highest calibre of Negro musician for the group. After about six months of rehearsals, the first concert was presented on January 17, 1932 at the Berea Presbyterian Church. The following news article appeared in the January 15, 1932 issue of the Saint Louis Argus, a local Negro weekly publication:

"A NEW SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA TO MAKE BOW AT  
BEREA CHURCH SUNDAY AT 3:30 PM

The Peoples Symphony Orchestra directed by Abram McClenney, a product of the New England Conservatory of Music will make its debut Sunday, January 17 at 3:30 PM. Mrs. Zella Cole Hunton, soprano and James H. Harris, violinist will be soloists on the program, and Clarence Hayden Wilson will give program notes for the numbers.

The program and musicians to take part will be as follows:

1. Overture: Bridal Rose C. Lavallee
2. Minuet (from Don Juan) Mozart
3. Souvenir de Hayden (for violin and piano) Leonard  
James H. Harris, violin soloist
4. Bridal Chorus (From Lohengrin) Wagner  
Intermission
5. Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child  
(arrangement by A. McClenney)
6. Compensation (for soprano and orchestra)  
A. McClenney  
Zella Cole Hunton, Soloist
7. Allegro Moderate (from Unfinished Symphony)  
Schubert

Personnel of Orchestra

Violins

James H. Harris	Tanner Stafford	Leonard Taylor
Robert Osborne	Thelma Johnson	Joseph Spotts
Clifford Douglas	Ruges Freeman	Artie Mosby



<u>Violas</u>	W. Fields	<u>Piano</u>
<u>Violoncellos</u>		Amos Tandy
David Grant	Nelson Martin	E. Summerville
<u>Bass Viol</u>		<u>Organ</u>
Edgar Shelton	W. Finney	J. Roy Terry
<u>French Horn</u>	<u>Trumpets</u>	<u>Clarinets</u>
Eddie McKinnie	Virgin Allen	Joseph Neville
	Beatrice Wade	Clifford Cochran

The first program presented was well received. This inspired the community to offer support to the orchestra. This group is thought to have been the first organized Negro orchestra of this sort west of the Mississippi.<sup>11</sup>

The second concert was presented on February 28, 1932 and the soloists were Laverne Hutcherson, tenor, current concert and musical comedy star, who made his debut as concert soloist on this program,<sup>12</sup> and Elsie Hailey Gordon, soprano of Chicago, Illinois.

Concerts were given each month, and among soloists presented the first year were J. Roy Terry, piano, Artie Mosby, violin, Letha Tyndall, soprano and Clarence Hayden Wilson, bass vocal soloist.

Herman Dreer, then assistant principal of Sumner High School, served as manager of the Peoples Symphony Orchestra, and headed the sponsoring organization which was called the Peoples Symphony Society.



In a news release, the following information appeared:

"An interested group of citizens elected the following temporary officers of the Peoples Symphony Society:

October	Herman Dreer	President
November	Richard K. Fox	Secretary
December	E.D. Hamilton	Treasurer

The aim of this organization is to stimulate in the citizens of Saint Louis a love for the best in music and to encourage and help Negro musicians to encourage persons with musical talent to study the art and technique with a view to the interpretation of standard works, to encourage persons of the Negro race to write various types of music in the most artistic way, and especially to devote attention to the organization and direction of a group of Negro musicians to be known as the Peoples Symphony Orchestra."<sup>13</sup>

The following information appeared in another release published to interest the public in the Peoples Symphony Orchestra:

"WHY SUPPORT THE PEOPLES SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA?"

1. To develop the love for the best in music
2. To encourage Negro musicians to interpret the best in music and to stimulate them to compose various types
3. To inspire the Negro boy or girl with musical talent to develop it
4. To raise the cultural level of Saint Louis
5. To provide an organization that will provide an excellent audience for visiting musicians."<sup>14</sup>

During an interview in discussion of this orchestra and its programming, McClenney said it was his purpose to present a soloist at each concert, for the benefit of the



public and also to give musicians and performers a chance to appear in concert.

For concerts during the 1932-1933 season the following were presented as soloists:

October 7th:	Antonio Haskell, Baritone
November 4th:	Mrs. Rowena McClenney Savage
December 2nd:	Mrs. Esther McClenney Powell of Gary Indiana, (Sister of Abram McClenney) pianist
December 25th:	Mrs. Adelaide Heriott, Soprano
February 3rd:	C. Spencer Tocus, pianist
March 3rd:	Abram McClenney, violinist
	Major N. Clark Smith, Guest Conductor
Easter Sunday:	Mabel Story
April 7th:	George Garner of Chicago Illinois, Tenor

Clarence Hayden Wilson wrote the program notes for these concerts.

When C. Spencer Tocus appeared as soloist with the orchestra, he played Grieg's 'Concerto in A Minor', performing so well that the assistant conductor of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, who was in the audience, interceded to have Tocus perform the same number with the Saint Louis Symphony at the student concert which was to be held at Sumner High School.<sup>15</sup>

Although the personnel of the orchestra changed from time to time, there were always the leading Negro musicians in the city as members of the Peoples Symphony Orchestra.

Because of financial and other operational difficulties, the Peoples Symphony Orchestra was disbanded in 1934. Abram McClenney discontinued his musical activities in Saint Louis, somewhat disgusted. He furthered



his education and received the Bachelors degree from Lincoln University of Jefferson City, Missouri, and Masters degree from Chicago Musical College, which is now part of Roosevelt University. As a part of requirements for the Masters degree, McClenney wrote his thesis on 'String Instruction for Negroes in Chicago Southside High Schools'. After spending many years employed in the public school system of Chicago, Illinois, McClenney has returned to Saint Louis.

The discontinuance of the Peoples Symphony Orchestra and the leaving of such individuals as McClenney was a cultural loss to Saint Louis according to some of the local musicians and music lovers. Unfortunately, there has not been another successful attempt to organize a community sponsored Negro symphony orchestra in Saint Louis. An attempt was made in the late 1930's headed by Henry Leving, but the orchestra was never fully organized and the effort was short lived.

### The Y Circus

For many years one of the most anxiously awaited entertainment events in Saint Louis, especially among the Negroe populace, was the Pine Street Y Circus. This was an annual event from 1935 until 1955 sponsored by the Pine Street Y.M.C.A. The Y Circus grew from an affair held for a few days in the gymnasium, to a six day production held at Kiel Auditorium, the city public



auditorium in Saint Louis. Most of the greatest names in Negro show business have been featured at these annual presentations.

The idea was credited to James E. Cook, current executive secretary of the Pine Street Y.M.C.A. after consultation with such civic personalities as Arthur Selectman, who was in show business.

The purpose of the Y Circus was to raise funds for the maintenance of the Pine Street Y camp located at Camp River Cliff, Missouri and for the benefit of other Pine Street Y activities.

The production of this circus was a civic enterprise. The production staff included James E. Cook, and other employees of the Pine Street Y.M.C.A. along with Saint Louisans who worked in capacities other than the entertainment field. Prominent staff members included John Buckner, teacher at Sumner High School, and Harold Garner, son of Silas Garner, prominent attorney, who is associated with the Russell Undertaking Company.

The Y Circus became a production with elaborate scenery and costumes. Each year a theme was chosen for the show, and the music, scenery and costumes helped to portray the theme.

One of the greatest assets of the Y circus to the community was the opportunity for amateur participation. At each production the first half of the program was devoted



mostly to amateur performers. The various high schools provided the nucleus of the talent. The music instructors in the schools prepared the musical groups for this affair. There was usually a soloist featured, and this provided inspiration to many young musicians to continue their musical activities. Among the many musicians and performers who have performed in Y circus productions are Lavern Hutcherson, Gwendolyn Belle, who while a student at Boston University studying voice, was an alternate 'Carmen' in the summer 1956 New York production of 'Carmen Jones', and Grace Bumbry who made an impressive appearance on Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts television program and more recently won a \$1000 award in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air.

The Y Circus has also afforded opportunity for local Negro musicians to display their talents as instrumentalists and music arrangers. In fact, for many years this production was the only annual opportunity for Negro musicians and arrangers to participate in such a presentation, for Negro musicians have always been excluded from employment for such events as the Police Circus, Fireman's Rodeo, Shriner's Circus and other such events. For the Y Circus there was usually a local band featured with from 10 to 20 musicians. This was anxiously anticipated by the musicians. For 12 years, the late Buggs Roberts was chief arranger and orchestra leader and conductor. His reputation became national



because of his arrangements and interpretations.

I was chosen to succeed Buggs Roberts, after his passing, in his associations with the Y Circus. In 1951 Ernie Wilkins, previously mentioned as one of the country's leading arrangers now, was my arranging associate for the presentation held that year. That was my first venture in such a capacity. From 1951 until 1955 when the last Y Circus was held, I was chief music arranger and during the first half of the last circus held I conducted the Erskine Hawkins orchestra which was augmented by seven musicians from Local No. 197, from the Saint Louis Negro affiliate with the A.F. of M.

The second half of the Y Circus productions featured national and internationally known talent.<sup>16</sup>

With such an affair held annually, and with the participation of students from the various high schools and local musicians, the Y Circus became a real influence on the continued development of Negro jazz musicians in Saint Louis and other performers in the popular music field.

### The Ebony Dots

Claude Collins came to Saint Louis in 1932 as a walkathon master of ceremonies. A portion of the entertainment activities featured at the walkathon was broadcast over Radio Station W I L with Collins as the master of



ceremonies. This gave Collins the distinction of being the first Negro to work in such a capacity on a regular broadcast in the city of Saint Louis.<sup>17</sup>

A Mr. West, (first name not available) president of the Missouri Insurance Company at that time, was a regular visitor to the walkathon and after the event closed, Claude Collins contacted him concerning his company sponsoring a regular radio program featuring a group which was formed during the activities of the walkathon. This group included Buster Collins, on harmonica, Lewis Crenshaw, pianist, along with Collins as vocalist and leader. This proved to be a profitable contact, for soon afterwards the Missouri Insurance Company sponsored such a program with the group being known as 'The Three Ebony Dots'. The first contract was for one week, then for five weeks, and later for six months. Subsequently the program lasted from 1933 until 1939.<sup>18</sup>

A fourth member, George Richardson, was added to the group later, and he gave imitations of a train on his harmonica at the beginning of the program which was a part of a commercial for the sponsors of the broadcast.

Guests artists appeared on the programs frequently. One of these acts was the 'Four Vagabonds', a quartet of students from Vashon High School. This group became a part of the program and were sent to Chicago by the Missouri Insurance Company to try out for a coast to coast network



show. So impressive was the tryout, that they were signed as a feature attraction on Don McNeill's Breakfast Club where they remained for five years. This program was a regular feature over the National Broadcasting Company. In this group was Robert O'Neil, John Jordan, Norvel Taborn and John Grant Jr.

As the Ebony Dots broadcast continued, their service to the community became known city wide. Many church groups were featured on the religious broadcasts, and other local talent was exhibited.

On the back cover of the 1937 edition of the booklet 'Your Saint Louis and Mine' appeared this information concerning the Ebony Dots, their sponsor and radio program:

"YOUR TRAIL BLAZER

MISSOURI INSURANCE COMPANY

and the

Original Radio Artists

The Ebony Dots

Louis, Buster, Claude and George

FIRST - to present a local radio hour for and by Colored People

FIRST - to give churches and worthy institutions a co-operative entertainment program which has raised thousands of dollars each year for religious and civic purposes

FIRST - in developing local talent, giving radio auditions for many young people."<sup>19</sup>

The Ebony Dots were the first and one of the few Negro musical groups in Saint Louis to be featured on their musical organization.



own radio program. The group was sent to various cities, as a promotional project of the Missouri Insurance Company, to appear in concert.

When the radio series ended, the various members of the group continued their musical activities. Lewis Crenshaw remained in Saint Louis and is still an active musician. George Richardson formed a harmonic quartet and toured Missouri, Kansas and Illinois in the interest of the Missouri Insurance Company. Collins remained in Saint Louis for a short while and went to California, and Gibson continued his work in various sections of the country.

#### The Tom Powell American Legion Post Drum and Bugle Corps

During this period the 'Tom Powell Drum and Bugle Corps' was organized. This organization now known as the 'Spirit of Saint Louis Drum and Bugle Corps' has been reorganized as one of the leading drum and bugle corps in the country for many years because of their fine showing in contests from coast to coast.<sup>20</sup>

There have been many of the most prominent Negro musicians associated with the Tom Powell Post. James H. Harris II was one of the first teachers of the corps and his son James H. Harris III followed in his footsteps after his death. Such musicians as Clark Terry, now featured with the Duke Ellington orchestra, were former members of this musical organization.



By the end of this period, the movement of the Negro in Music in Saint Louis was ready for the expansion period that was to follow. The music program in the schools had been standardized as far as instruction was concerned. Both Negro high schools had an instrumental as well as a vocal music program instituted with competent instructors and directors. A small Negro orchestra had made its debut during this period. Unfortunately the orchestra did not last to grow into the symphony orchestra many had anticipated, but it seemed to have offered an impetus for the future.

As the Negro music leaders were becoming recognized throughout this area, appearances of groups under their direction became more prominent.

Frequent appearances of high school groups with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra did much to encourage and inspire the students.

By the medium of the Y Circus, many talented Saint Louis Negro jazz musicians, vocalists and dancers were given the opportunity to perform on a professional level which resulted in many of them continuing a career in some phase of music.

#### 1940-1950

The period from 1940 to 1950 was a definite turning point in the musical movement of the Negro in



Saint Louis. Before this period most of the outstanding music leaders had not been native Saint Louisans, but during this decade a number of Saint Louis musicians emerged as leaders benefiting from the inspiration and training they had received from already established music leaders.

Among these new leaders were Walter Lathen, Kenneth Brown Billups and Ruth Green. These people were former students in the Saint Louis Public School System. Influenced by and interested in the local Negro musical development, they continued their musical education at various universities and returned to Saint Louis to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors and in many cases worked along with their former instructors.

As Saint Louis grew, so did the stature of the Negro musicians. As opportunities were offered for advancement and further achievement, these were capable Negro musicians in Saint Louis to step in and take up the challenge.

The efforts of the musicians associated with the public schools seemed to take precedence over the musicians in other phases of music, excluding possibly the jazz musicians.

The instrumental music program among the Negro musicians, other than jazz, had declined somewhat, and



in the churches there remained the difficulty that many of the members associated and belonging to the various choral groups had little or no musical training and only a desire to sing as their contribution to the church services. Many of the choirs have to content themselves with music directors with limited musical background.

With the dissolution of the Peoples Symphony Orchestra, the passing of such pioneers as William Blue, the departure from Saint Louis of such individuals as Abram McClenney, there seemed to have been little concerted efforts made for the reorganization of an orchestra similar to the Peoples Symphony Orchestra, to maintain a band of the same calibre that had existed in previous periods, and for organizations to sponsor supervised instrumental instruction for the preparation of marching band employment. Possibly the standardization of music instruction in the public schools was the principle factor responsible for this decline, for in the schools more emphasis was made on band and orchestra participation; the music program was broadened; and the schools gradually took the place of the various lodges as a source of musical knowledge and experience. Another important factor was the trend towards the popular music field for the professional and semi-professional instrumentalist, a phase of music in which Saint Louis musicians had become quite prominent.



Degree The American Negro Music Festival, to be discussed on page 246 which was held in Saint Louis during this period was one of the most outstanding musical events held during this decade.

#### Music in The Schools

As this period began, C. Spencer Tocus was vocal music instructor at Vashon High School, and Stanley Lee Henderson was in charge of the instrumental music program. Wirt D. Walton taught at Stowe Teachers College besides being vocal music instructor at Sumner High School where Clarence Hayden Wilson was in charge of the instrumental music program.

Walter Lathen - Instituted an instrumental music training As a part of the efforts of the Webster Groves Board of Education to improve the music programs in the Negro schools of Saint Louis County, Walter Lathen was employed at the Douglass High School in Webster Groves, Missouri during this period as music instructor, handling both the vocal and instrumental music programs. Lathen had attended Sumner High School, where he received music instruction from C. Spencer Tocus, before going to the Monterey High School in Monterey, California where he graduated. He received advance education at Lincoln University at Jefferson City, Missouri and at the University of Illinois. He is currently a candidate for a Masters



Degree from Washington University with a major in Music Education. Lathen came back to Saint Louis after setting up the instrumental music program in the Negro schools of Cairo, Illinois where he served as high school music teacher and music supervisor.

When Kenneth Brown Billups came to the Douglass High School in 1942, Lathen was given the opportunity to devote his efforts to instrumental music, and his work in that capacity had established him as one of the leading high school instrumental music instructors and band directors in the area.

Lathen is credited with starting the practice at Douglass High School of the school band playing for the football games. He also instituted an instrumental music training program in the Negro elementary schools of Webster Groves.

His bands at the Douglass High School have added much distinction to the schools for their fine performances in parades, for concerts and at various music festivals.

For a period of ten years Lathen has been director of the band which performed during the activities of the annual Brotherhood program sponsored by the National Council of Christians and Jews which is presented in Saint Louis. This has been an integrated band with its members being selected from the various high schools in the Saint Louis area.



Lathen came to Douglass High School in 1940 and remained there until 1956 when the schools in Webster Groves became integrated. He then was employed in the same capacity at the newly integrated Webster Groves High School where he is currently in charge of the junior high school band. He also assists with the senior band doing special work with sectional rehearsals. According to Lathen, in his work with the senior band he stresses the subject matter of his dissertation, 'Teaching Musical Style and Interpretation in High School Bands'. Among his other activities in the Webster Groves School System is teaching string and woodwind instruments in the elementary schools as part of his duties as elementary instrumental music instructor.

When the Musical And Arts University was in operation, Lathen was instructor of string bass. Among his other community activities was as a conductor of music classes at the All Saints Episcopal Church.

Kenneth Brown Billups -

Another of the current music leaders in Kenneth Brown Billups who received his early education in the Saint Louis Public School System. Billups graduated from Sumner High School where he was a member of the Boys Glee Club. He furthered his education at Lincoln University, and Northwestern University, where he received his Master's Degree.



Billups joined Lathen in the music department at Douglass High School in Webster Groves, Missouri in 1942 , as has been mentioned. He became choral musical instructor and choir director. While serving in that capacity for seven years, Billups soon attained the distinction of being one of the leaders in the choral music program in the schools of this vicinity.

In 1949, Billups was employed by the Saint Louis Board of Education at the Sumner High School as director of choral music, a position he still maintains. This opportunity arose when Wirt D. Walton was employed as full time music instructor at Stowe Teachers College.

The choir under Billups's direction was the first Negro high school choir to enter the music festival competition at Columbia, Missouri. The Sumner High School Choir under his direction has also appeared in festivals at Lincoln University and has always received superior rating.

Among the many highlight appearances of the Sumner Choir under the direction of Billups have been appearances with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. Among these appearances was the one in 1951 when "The Singers" by John W. Work was presented; the performance of Mahler's "Resurrection Symphony" in 1955; and the performance of Stravinski's "Symphony of Psalms". Each of these received favorable comment.



Among recent outstanding performances of the choir in concerts presented at Sumner High School have been presentations of Menotti's 'Amahl and the Night Visitors'; Beethoven's 'Ninth Symphony', the choral section; and Kurt Weill's 'Down in the Valley'. The choir has also presented performances of Handel's 'Messiah'.

Besides the above named presentations, the choir has been presented in concerts regularly at the school, at various churches and other public places in and around Saint Louis. There has also been extensive tours to such cities as New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Indianapolis. These appearances of the Sumner High School Choir had merited favorable comments, thus adding the name of Kenneth Brown Billups to the list of other capable Saint Louis musicians who have continued through the years the efforts of the pioneers of this movement.

Besides his activities in the school music program, Billups has been very active in other community projects. He is Minister of Music at the Antioch Baptist Church, director of the 'Legend Singers', one of the outstanding vocal groups in the area (see page 249), organizer of the 'Cosmopolitan Choir', an interracial vocal group which has appeared in concert in the Saint Louis area, director of the Saint Louis 'Wings over Jordan' Choir, which annually goes on tour to various sections of the United States, is a composer and arranger, specializing in



religious music.

Among his compositions are:

1. Missouri Choral Song, based on Russian Idiom. Published in 1943 by Hall & McCreary Co.

2. Black Man and His Heaven
3. My Songs to Sell

Among his published choral arrangements are adaptations of:

1. Swing Low Sweet Chariot
2. Certainly Lord
3. My Soul is a Witness
4. I Stood on the River of Jordan
5. Everytime I Feel the Spirit
6. I want Jesus to Walk with Me
7. Go Down Moses
8. Rock a My Soul.

Choral arrangements of Billups have been published by such companies as G. Schirmer, Hall and McCreary, Belwin Company, Shattinger and the Choral Press of Evanston, Illinois.

A tone poem entitled 'America in the 40's', a suite, was performed in 1949 by the Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra.

Among the other musical associations of Billups have been president of the Saint Louis Music Association from 1949 until 1951, on the Folk Music Committee of the



M.E.N.C. and on the Missouri Elementary School Music Committee. He is presently on the Board of Directors of the National Negro Music Association Incorporated.

The value of Billups to this musical movement has been indicated by the achievements of Billups and the success of his students. Many of these students have taken private lessons from him besides performing with glee clubs and choirs under his direction. Among these are Grace Bumbry and Gwendolyn Belle who will be discussed in Chapter

Ruth Green -

In 1943, Ruth Green another former student of Sumner High School, came to Vashon High School as choral music director. This opportunity arose as C. Spencer Tocus ceased his activities with the music in the schools in preparation for an administrative position. After teaching in the elementary schools in Saint Louis, Miss Green furthered her education at Juilliard School of Music and Columbia University, both of New York City, New York.

While at Sumner High School she received music instruction and inspiration from Gerald Tyler.

At Vashon she kept up the work of C. Spencer Tocus and soon merited recognition as a capable replacement for him.

The following is the program for the 5th Annual



Since 1943, the Vashon High School Choir under the direction of Ruth Green has appeared in concert at the School and many other places in and around Saint Louis including:

1. Many presentations at Washington University
2. Appearances on radio stations KMOX, KXOK, and KSD
3. Television appearances
4. At many of the Y Circus presentations
5. Annual concerts at Country Day School
6. Globe Democrat Christmas Pageants at Kiel Auditorium

For news article heralding the Vashon High School Choir and Ruth Green see Appendix XVII.

#### American Negro Music Festival

In July 1944, the 5th Annual American Negro Music Festival was held in Saint Louis at Sportsman's Park, now Busch Stadium. This festival presented to the Saint Louis public not only internationally known Negro artists, but one of the soloists with the Metropolitan Opera Company and a massed chorus of Saint Louis developed singers.<sup>21</sup>

A magazine called 'Harmony' was published in 1944 to elaborate on the music of the Negro in America and to present to Saint Louis the history and significance of the American Negro Music Festival.<sup>22</sup>

The following is the program for the 5th Annual







- b) Gifts Templeton  
 c) Di Provenza Verdi 'La Traviata'

15. 'Search for Talent' Winners

16. Community Singing with the Massed Choir  
and the U.S. Coast Guard Band

17. Madame Lillian Evanti, coloratura soprano

- a) Estrellita Ponce  
 b) Indian Love Call Primi  
 c) Of Forse Lui, aria Verdi 'La Traviata'  
 d) I Want Jesus to Walk With Me, spiritual Boatner

18. The Southernaires

- a) Soon I Will be Done with the Troubles  
 of This World

- b) The Rosary  
 d) Certainly Lord  
 d) We Are Americans, Too

Roy Yeats, tenor; Jay Stone, baritone;  
 Lowell Peters, 2nd tenor; William Edmundson,  
 bass; Spencer Odum, accompanist

19. God Bless America Massed Choir  
 U.S. Coast Guard Band  
 Langston Hughes, Narrator."23

I was in the audience to witness this festival, and I can only say that it was perhaps the most varied musical presentation possible. From the reviews of the festival, most of the commentators felt as I, that the performers gave a wonderful presentation which, although it was a lengthy, program, was enjoyed by most of the audience. This was evidenced by their applause and standing ovation upon the conclusion of the festival.

Such events as this did much to inspire the Saint Louis Negro musicians for besides being afforded an



opportunity to perform, chance was given to hear internationally known artists. The many artists were well received, and the affair gave a cultural boost to Saint Louis because of the many Saint Louisans involved in the promotion and sponsorship of this festival.<sup>24</sup>

### The Legend Singers

Another highlight of this period was the organization of a choral group called 'The Legend Singers'. This group, which came into existence in 1942, was formed from a chorus directed by Kenneth Brown Billups as a project under the sponsorship of the N.Y.A. (National Youth Administration). When the N.Y.A. operations terminated, the group, before called the N.Y.A. Chorus, stayed together, and was given its present name, 'The Legend Singers', with Billups continuing as director and leader. Included in this group were such singers as Lavern Hutcherson, who is now internationally known as a concert artist.

The Legend Singers have appeared in Saint Louis and surrounding vicinity through the years and are still active. Included among the many performances of this group were:

1. In the 1943, 1947 and 1952 Municipal Opera Productions of 'Show Boat'
2. In the Municipal Opera production of 'Annie Get Your Gun', in 1953

3. Many of the Y Circus presentations



4. The Saint Louis Calvacade in 1943 a General Motors production
5. In choral production 'Rolling Along in Negro Song' presented at Kiel Auditorium in 1945.<sup>25</sup>
6. On Television Station KSD TV with the Laclede Gas Company Symphonette
7. At Washington University during the Little Symphony series
8. In 1958 Minicipal Opera productions of 'Show Boat' and 'Finians Rainbow'. In Finians Rainbow, Kenneth Billups portrayed the part of the preacher.

In 1958, the Legend Singers also appeared on two Columbia Broadcasting Networks.

This group has received many favorable newspaper reports.<sup>26</sup>

#### Adrian Johnson

Another of the music leaders in the churches of Saint Louis is Adrian Johnson, organist and choir director who first came to Saint Louis in the late 1920's. Johnson obtained his education in the parochial schools of Saint Louis, and furthered his education in such Catholic schools as Saint Augustine Seminary of Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi, and Creighton University of Omaha, Nebraska. He also studied at the Gregorian Institute of Toledo, Ohio where he received choirmaster training and instructions concerning gregorian chant.<sup>27</sup>

When he returned to Saint Louis he was well prepared from the improved teaching in the public schools



to embark on his music career in the various catholic churches in Saint Louis. Johnson was organist at the Saint Elizabeth Catholic Church for many years, and also served in the same capacity at the Saint Malachy's Church. During this period he had the distinction of being organist at the Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church, the Saint Louis University Church, being one of the few Negroes to serve in such capacity in one of the leading catholic churches in the city.

Johnson also organized the first interracial choir in a catholic church in Saint Louis. This was organized while he was at Saint Frances Xavier. He served there for ten years.

Johnson is currently choir director and organist at the Saint Adolphus Rock Church where he has organized the first predominantly Negro church to perform at an interracial catholic church in Saint Louis.<sup>28</sup>

Mentioned by Johnson as one of the leading soloists among the Negroes active in the music of the catholic churches in Saint Louis was Arthur Burgett. Burgett is one of the few Negro soloists in Saint Louis paid for his performances with various church choirs.

During this period the value of the Negro musical movement to the community was fully realized as leaders emerged from the large group which had benefited from the improved teaching in the public schools



As Walter Lathen, Kenneth Brown Billups, and Ruth Green became instructors in the public school system of Saint Louis and surrounding areas, they became musical associates with some of the individuals who had instructed and inspired them.

Frequent appearances of Saint Louis musical groups in other cities brought added prestige to the community.

5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Statement made during interview 12/26/58
8. Wilson received his advanced education at Northwestern University.
9. Henderson received his advanced education at Milwaukee State Teachers College, University of Wisconsin, University of Indiana and the University of Michigan.  
He expects to receive his doctorate from the University of Iowa in 1959.
10. According to information obtained from Henderson during an interview.
11. According to information received from McClanney during interview.
12. Ibid.
13. This release, still in possession of Abram McClanney, was prepared for newspapers and was displayed and read at civic meetings.
14. This information was also for newspapers and for distribution at churches and other community places seeking support for the orchestra.



# FOOTNOTES for CHAPTER IV

1. N. Clark Smith was a Major in the United States National Guard attached to the Eighth Army in Illinois.
2. According to information obtained from Obadiah Woods during interview 2/15/55. Woods, a local tailor, was a personal friend of Major Smith and also a music associate with Smith at the Saint James A.M.E. Church where Woods was a member of the choir under the direction of Smith.
3. Ibid
4. According to information obtained from Jewell Belle during interview 7/13/56
5. Ibid
6. Ibid
7. Statement made during interview 12/26/55
8. Wilson received his advanced education at Northwestern University.
9. Henderson received his advanced education at Milwaukee State Teachers College, University of Wisconsin, University of Indiana and the University of Michigan.  
He expects to receive his doctorate from the University of Iowa in 1959.
10. According to information obtained from Henderson during an interview.
11. According to information received from McClenney during interview
12. Ibid.
13. This release, still in possession of Abram McClenney, was prepared for newspapers and was displayed and read at civic meetings.
14. This information was also for newspapers and for distribution at churches and other community places seeking support for the orchestra.



15. According to information received from Abram McClenney during interview 10/14/56. Verified by Julia Davis and C. Spencer Tocus.
16. For complete history of Y Circus and performers through the years see Appendix XV.
17. Information obtained from Julia Davis and Lewis Crenshaw during interviews.
18. According to information obtained from Lewis Crenshaw during interview 7/19/56
19. Your Saint Louis and Mine  
Booklet published in 1937 by N.B. Young, Saint Louis, Missouri.
20. For complete history of Tom Powell Post see Appendix XVI
21. On the board of directors of the sponsoring committee for the festival were such prominent Saint Louisans as Bernard Dickman, postmaster; Harold W. Ross, local Negro business man who was the festival director; William Sentner, labor leader; James E. Cook, executive secretary of the Pine St. Y.M.C.A.; Edwin Meissner, president of the Saint Louis Car Company, who was the chairman of the board of directors; Joseph L. McLemore, president of the Mount City Bar Association; Mrs. Ethel Bowles, director of the United Service organization; who was the chairman of the sponsoring committee; Sidney Redmond, president of the Saint Louis Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. and Mrs. George Gellhorn, president of the Saint Louis League of Women Voters.  
  
Other members of the sponsoring committee were such individuals as Vladimir Golschman, conductor of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and David Grant, prominent Negro attorney.
22. For history of American Negro Music Festival, see Appendix XVIII
23. Program from the booklet 'Harmony' published for this festival.



24. For names of individuals and organizations who received acknowledgement for their assistance in sponsoring and promoting this festival see Appendix XIX.
25. I was orchestral musical arranger for this presentation. Musicians included members of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and members of the Musicians Union Local No. 197.
26. For article written after a successful performance of the Legend Singers in 1957 see Appendix XX.
27. Information obtained from Adrian Johnson during an interview at the Rock Church on 7/24/56.
28. Ibid

signed as a regular member of the Metropolitan Opera Company; La Vada Easter, who became the first woman and the first Negro to receive the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts from the Chicago Musical College; Eugene Haynes, who after receiving high honors in the undergraduate and graduate schools at Juilliard School of Music, embarked on a career as a concert pianist, went to Europe for further training and became a recognized artist; Grace Bumbry, who after a superb performance on Arthur Godfrey's Radio and Television Show, continued her musical training and was one of the winners in the 1958 Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air; Gwendolyn Sells, who at the age of 20 was chosen to portray the role of 'Carmen Jones' produced in New York; and Helen Phillips, who has developed into an international known concert singer.

Much of the success of these musicians has been credited to the teachers and instructors both in the public



## CHAPTER V

### THE NEGRO IN MUSIC IN SAINT LOUIS from 1950

#### Saint Louis Individual Accomplishments

From 1950 until the present time, the movement of the Negro in Music in Saint Louis has been climaxed by some really significant accomplishments of native Saint Louis Negro musicians and Negro musicians of the Saint Louis area.

Among these individuals who have received wide acclaim for their efforts since 1950 are Robert McFerrin, who has the distinction of being the first Negro to be signed as a regular member of the Metropolitan Opera Company; La Vada Easter, who became the first woman and the first Negro to receive the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts from the Chicago Musical College; Eugene Haynes, who after receiving high honors in the undergraduate and graduate school at Juilliard School of Music, embarked on a career as a concert pianist, went to Europe for further training and became a recognized artist; Grace Bumbry, who after a superb performance on Arthur Godfrey's Radio and Television Show, continued her musical training and was one of the winners in the 1958 Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air; Gwendolyn Belle, who at the age of 20 was chosen to portray the role of 'Carmen Jones' produced in New York; and Helen Phillips, who has developed into an internationally known concert singer.

Much of the success of these musicians has been credited to the teachers and instructors both in the public



schools and in the homes, private studios throughout the Saint Louis area.

The Saint Louis Music Association has continued through the years as one of the most influential Negro musical organizations in the city for the development and encouragement of musical talent.

The schools continued to be another medium for musical production, as many of the long established leaders were still active in the music departments of the various schools.

In keeping with the tradition of this movement, the leaders in the community and in the schools were also active in the music in the churches.

As the educational facilities for Negroes were broadened in the city and the state, this gave opportunity for further study and training in accredited colleges and universities.

#### Robert McFerrin - 1922

The signing of Robert McFerrin as the first Negro on a general repertory basis with the Metropolitan Opera Company during this period can be noted as one of the greatest achievements of a Saint Louis Negro in the field of music. McFerrin, who received his early education in the Saint Louis public schools was a graduate of Sumner High School in 1940. He was a member of the Sumner High



Boys Glee Club and A Cappella choir under the direction of Wirt D. Walton, who also was his vocal teacher.<sup>1</sup>

After graduation from Sumner High School, McFerrin attended Fisk University and the Chicago Musical College, financially aided by interracial committee headed by Wirt D. Walton. Later, with funds given him by Mrs. David Kriegshaber, organist at Temple Israel, where McFerrin had appeared as soloist, he went to New York for further study and possible concert appearances. His talent was brought to the attention of Boris Goldovsky who offered him a scholarship in the opera department of Tanglewood. After appearances in and around New York singing roles in such operas as Gluck's "Iphigenia in Tauris" and "Rigoletto", McFerrin entered as a contestant in the 1953 Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air and was named a winner by unanimous vote of the judges. He was then given a scholarship at the Kathryn Turney Long Opera Courses, six weeks of voice training usually reserved for singers of the Metropolitan Opera Company. He was the first Negro singer to be trained by the Metropolitan Opera Company.

After other concert appearances, McFerrin was asked to sign a contract as a regular member of the Metropolitan Opera Company in 1955 and made his debut in the production of "Aida". His debut was a tremendous success, according to comments which followed his historic performance.



Being a personal friend of Robert McFerrin, I visited him on June 15, 1956 at his residence in New York and facts concerning his musical career were discussed. McFerrin stated what a privilege and thrill it was to him to be with such a renowned musical organization as the Metropolitan Opera Company, and to be performing with the many internationally known artists who are connected with the company. He further stated that such achievements only served as an incentive for him to work harder in an effort to always be prepared for a superb performance.

One of his appearances while sent on concert tour by the Metropolitan Opera Company before his debut, was at the Washington University Festival of Music held on May 3rd through May 8th, 1954. McFerrin was guest soloist at the Empress Theatre Playhouse with the Washington University Festival Chorus of which I was a member, and the Washington University orchestra. On this program he sang three songs with orchestral accompaniment:

1. "Sentinel's Night Song" (from Youth's Magic Horn) by Gustave Mahler
2. "In Praise of Lofty Intellect" (from Youth's Magic Horn) by Gustave Mahler
3. "The Creed of Pierre Cauchon" (from the Triumph of St. Joan) by Norman Dello Joio

With the festival chorus he sang the title role of 'Boris' in the coronation scene from "Boris Godunov" by Moussorgsky.



### La Vada Easter - 1925

Another native Saint Louisan who has achieved considerable success in the field of music is La Vada Easter, who began her career as a concert pianist, and is now a musicologist. She is the daughter of one of the prominent music teachers of Saint Louis, Bennie Parks Easter. She graduated from Sumner in 1940 at the age of

15. Miss Easter, born in Saint Louis and educated in the Saint Louis public school system, was presented in her first public performance as piano soloist at the age of 11, and was hailed as a child prodigy. In this program were included works of Mozart, Bach and Franz Liszt. This concert preceeded her going to New York to appear as soloist at one of the conventions of the National Negro Music Association, Inc. She continued her musical

education. Around 1940, it was recognized that the talents of La Vada Easter as a performer on the piano were much more than the usual accomplishments of a child student, and the fact that she had a promising future in the field of music became evident. She left the school for

Further From an appearance during that year the following review appeared in a local newspaper:

"Before an audience which filled assembly Room No. 3 at the Municipal Auditorium last evening, La Vada Easter made her debut as a piano recitalist. A brilliant welcome to a young artist of great promise which the affiliated Negro Musicians of Saint Louis looked with pride."<sup>2</sup>



While a student at Sumner High School, Miss Easter was accompanist for various choral groups, violin player in the orchestra and appeared often as piano soloist. Besides her many school activities, she appeared in concert in and around Saint Louis. During this time, her mother was her piano teacher.

She graduated from Sumner in 1940 at the age of 15. Her freshman and sophomore college years were spent at Webster College where she continued her musical training and concert work. She was enrolled there as a special student since Negroes were not admitted to the school at that time. She studied piano there also.

Miss Easter completed her undergraduate work at Fisk University of Nashville, Tennessee where she attained the degree of Music Bachelor. She continued her musical education at the Chicago Musical College where she continued studying the piano, and later changed to musicology in which she obtained a Master's Degree.

In 1946, the white musicologist on the faculty of Howard University of Washington, D.C. left the school for further study. Dean Lawson of Howard University contacted Dean Rosenwald of the Chicago Musical College for recommendation of someone to fill the vacancy on the faculty of Howard University, and Miss Easter was recommended for the position.<sup>3</sup> She joined the faculty of the Music



Department of Howard University as Professor of Music History and Musicology in 1946, and is still there.

Miss Easter returned to Chicago Musical College and received her doctorate in 1950. This accomplishment was noted in the following article:

"La Vada Easter was the first woman and the first Negro to receive the Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts from the Chicago Musical College. She has been cited by Dr. Rudolph Ganz, president of the Chicago Musical College, for her excellent academic record as well as her artistry at the piano.

Her doctorate dissertation "The Chronometrical Concept of Form" has already attracted the attention of leading theorists and musicologists and is expected to have far reaching influence in the field of form and analysis of music."<sup>4</sup>

Among the fellowships and scholarships awarded Miss Easter are:

1. A Rosenwald Fellowship in Musicology in 1948
2. Scholarship piano training from Robert Casadesus and Nadia Boulanger, in France in 1950
3. Oliver Ditson Scholarship in Musicology
4. Elizabeth Dooley Clark Scholarship in Piano

#### Eugene Haynes

Among other Saint Louis area Negro musicians who have benefited from instructions and inspiration of local present day music leaders is Eugene Haynes. His



accomplishments as a concert pianist and composer have brought him national and international attention.

Haynes, a native of East Saint Louis, Illinois, was educated in the East Saint Louis public school system, graduating from the Lincoln High School where he received instructions from Elwood Buchanan, band director and music instructor.

Haynes began to show potentialities as a pianist at the age of four and one-half years as he began picking out tunes he had heard. This prompted his parents to start him taking piano lessons from Irene King, one of the teachers of East Saint Louis. Because of his disinterest in the technicalities of music and the piano, and his desire to continue playing by 'ear', these lessons were discontinued. Upon entering Lincoln High School, the need for musical training became apparent to Haynes and his family, and soon he became a student of Stanley Lee Henderson, beginning a musical association which has lasted through the years.<sup>5</sup>

Haynes presented his first piano recital while in junior high school. After this recital, he appeared in recitals and musical affairs both in the school and in the community. He became pianist at the Church of God in Christ in East Saint Louis soon afterwards. The congregational singing during the services at this church helped develop his ear and his ability to improvise.<sup>6</sup>



company Soon after graduating from high school, Haynes obtained employment at Stix Baer and Fuller Department Store in Saint Louis. He had no idea at that time that the acceptance of this employment would eventually result in his embarking on a career as a concert pianist.

shown by While being employed at Stix, he sought a piano to practice on during his lunch hour, and was granted permission to do this on one of the pianos at the store. These practice sessions soon became 'lunch hour concerts' which attracted an audience. Floyd Ray, one of the buyers for the Stix Baer Fuller Company, told Arthur Baer, one of the store owners, about the potential musical talents of Haynes and Baer became interested. He listened to Haynes at one of the practice sessions unknown to Haynes. The day before Haynes planned to quit the job because of the drudgery of being merely a maintenance man at a department store, Haynes was called into the office of Fuller, another of the store owners. Fuller informed Haynes that his musical talents had created quite an interest among the executives of the store, and they considered him to be musically gifted and wanted to help him further his musical development. Haynes assured Mr. Fuller he was delighted at the interest shown, and would greatly appreciate anything they would do for him. Haynes' mother was contacted and she readily gave her permission for the

ing. In Europe he began to study with Lucille Wallace, harpsichordist, and Clifford Curzon. He was granted a



company to sponsor the musical education of Haynes. An appointment was soon made with Vladimir Golschman, then conductor of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, for the purpose of Golschman hearing Haynes perform at the piano. Golschman was greatly impressed at the musical potentiality shown by Haynes, and immediately became interested in his career. He, Golschman, made plans for musical education of Haynes, selecting the school and the teachers.

After all necessary arrangements were completed, Eugene Haynes was enrolled at the Juilliard School of Music in New York in 1944 where he began his studies in piano, composition and other related subjects. He began his piano studies with Catherine Bacon, and his composition teacher was Grant Williamson. At the end of the summer session of that year, Haynes was put on a full scholarship basis because of his high scholarship record. Stix, Baer and Fuller Company assumed the role of his parents, and took care of all financial obligations including education and living expense.

When Haynes finished his undergraduate work at Juilliard, Haynes went to Lincoln University of Jefferson City, Missouri in 1950 where he became a member of the faculty in the Department of Music. He served in this capacity for one year when upon the advise of Vladimir Golschman he went to Europe for further study and concertizing. In Europe he began to study with Lucille Wallace, harpsichordist, and Clifford Curzon. He was granted a



scholarship to study with Nadia Boulanger, internationally known music figure. He studied with her for three years. Haynes related that during these years of study with Mme. Boulanger, he found himself musically. From instruction and inspiration obtained from her, he realized what was lacking in his compositions and his playing. He said he discovered a new basis of music theory from instructions of Mme. Boulanger.

In Europe, Haynes also appeared in concert in many countries and was highly acclaimed. While in Scandinavia concertizing he was commissioned by Svend Fridberg of Denmark to write the background music for a Danish play. In England he was commissioned to write music for a presentation of 'Wuthering Heights', produced by Sir Basil Frazier.

After a short visit to East St. Louis in the summer of 1956 where he was presented in a concert at a church in East Saint Louis, Haynes returned to Europe to continue his work in the concert field. He stated that in Europe there were and are more opportunities for him to make a career as a concert pianist because of the cultural advantages of the many countries, and the lack of the prejudice which exists in the United States. Considering the many successful concert appearances of Haynes in foreign countries, the question arises why he has not been



presented in concert with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra or for other appearances in the Saint Louis area.

Besides his concert appearances in Europe, Haynes has also appeared in concert in the Latin American countries. He also performed during the Brussel's World Fair, having been invited by a Belgian group.

Haynes returned to Lincoln University in the fall of 1957 and became piano instructor and teacher of music theory and composition. In the summers of 1957 and 1958 he returned to Europe for concert appearances, returning to Lincoln for the Fall term.

#### Helen Phillips - 1919

Another of the native Saint Louisans who has achieved success in the field of concert music is Helen Phillips.

She received her early education in the Saint Louis Public School System, attending the Simmons Elementary School where Julia Davis, one of the teachers there, first noticed her unusual voice, and predicted even then a bright future for her in the field of music. At Sumner High School, from which she graduated, Miss Phillips was a member of the Sumner High School Choir, but was not featured as soloist.

During this time she was taking voice training from Louise Kroeger of the Kroeger School of Music, from whom she studied German and French song interpretations.



which she received a certificate after the prescribed course of study.

Continuing her education, Miss Phillips attended Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri from which she received a Bachelors Degree in Sociology. She did graduate work at Fisk University where she received a Mssters Degree in Sociology and did work on her Bachelor of Music degree. At Fisk she was a featured contralto soloist with the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

Returning to Saint Louis, Miss Phillips, while working in a non-musical capacity, continued her musical activities. Upon the encouragement and financial assistance of interested Saint Louisans, she was sent to New York for further voice training. Among these interested citizens who became sponsors of her musical education and training were Mr. and Mrs. John Haskell of 12 Washington Terrace, Saint Louis, Missouri; Robert Hanna, brother of Mr. Haskell; and Mrs. Thomas Sayman, prominent music patron of Saint Louis. The Haskells had known Miss Phillips since she was a young girl, as her mother Mrs. Phillips and her sister Mrs. Lettie Stoner have been in the employ of the Haskell family for years as household workers.

Among her voice teachers in New York were Idelle Patterson, with whom she studied voice technique, and Paul Breisach, former conductor at the Metropolitan Opera, with whom she studied German and French song interpretations.



In 1945, Miss Phillips replaced Carol Brice as soloist at the Saint George's Episcopal Church in New York. (Miss Brice had been the first female Negro soloist while Harry T. Burleigh was male soloist.) Miss Phillips remained here as soloist for a period of five years. While at Saint Georges, she related that she had valuable experience performing many of the standard vocal works of such composers as Bach, Mozart and Beethoven. She gave a special performance for the prominent Albert Schweitzer in 1949. She also appeared as soloist at the funerals of several of the J.P. Morgan family, who were members of this church. She also sang at the funeral of Harry T. Burleigh.

Among her other musical activities in New York was as soloist for three years with the E. Franco Goldman Band during its Central Park summer concerts. She was the first vocal soloist to be featured with the band since Rosa Ponselle, who was featured thirty years before. This began in 1949, the year after she made her debut at Town Hall in New York.<sup>8</sup>

In 1951, the State Department sent Miss Phillips on a tour of Germany where she was very favorably received. Her interpretations of German Lieder made her quite a favorite in Germany.

While in Europe she was presented in many countries, performing a presentation of Brahms's *Requiem* with chorus



and sang at many of the leading opera houses. She appeared with such conductors as George Enesco, the noted violinist, in France, and Knopper Busch in Germany.

She also studied while in Europe, receiving theatre instructions in Rome for one year, and instructions in antique Italian music and opera. During this tour she appeared mostly in northern Europe.

In 1956, Miss Phillips, with Spain as her headquarters, toured southern Europe concertizing in Spain, Portugal and Northern Africa, appearing at many of the leading opera houses in these countries. She also lectured on American music at the conservatory at the University of Barcelona. She was the first Negro to sing at the Opera House in Barcelona. This concert was held in November of 1957.

Among her appearances in Saint Louis, was an appearance in concert with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra in 1948 and a presentation in Concert at Kiel Auditorium sponsored by the Saint Louis Fisk Club in 1950.<sup>10</sup>

She had appeared at Washington University during the summer concert series of 1949. Max Steindel conducted the Little Symphony at these concerts. Also in 1949 she won the Saint Louis Artists Appreciation Award presented by the Wednesday Club. She had made another appearance at Washington performing a presentation of Brahms's Requiem with chorus



under the direction of Dr. Leigh Gerdine, Chairman of the Department of Music of Washington University.

In a recent appearance in Saint Louis she was one of the four soloists who performed with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra during presentation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Under the direction of Vladimir Golschman this program was presented on March 12 and 13 of 1955, during an all Beethoven concert.<sup>11</sup>

Miss Phillips has also appeared in concert in South America. In May 1955, she appeared in many opera houses in Mexico. During this tour she also concertized in Peru, Chile, Argentina, Ecuador and in the Dominion of Porto Rico.

Presently Miss Phillips is in Saint Louis resting from her extensive traveling, and very anxious to be presented in concert in her native Saint Louis, or in other leading cities of the United States so that she may have the opportunity to win the acclaim in America she has won in other countries. Again, this seems to be a sociological problem which confronts many of the American Negro artists.

#### Grace Bumbry - 1937

Among the young Saint Louis Negro musicians for whom a bright future on the concert stage is predicted is Grace Bumbry. Her performance on the Arthur Godfrey Time radio talent contest sponsored by Schlegel's Vanderhoof



nation-wide radio-television show, 'Talent Scouts', was heralded as outstanding. This performance was on May 17, 1954. Her rendition of 'O Don Fatale' by Verdi resulted in her receiving national comment. Godfrey, moved to tears made favorable comments.<sup>12</sup>

Miss Bumbry, a native Saint Louisan was educated in the public schools of Saint Louis. When she entered Sumner High School, she soon became associated with the musical organizations of the school. She attracted the attention of Billups while a member of the Girl's Glee Club.

Billups, continuing his interest in the development of musical talent, took a personal interest in Miss Bumbry and began voice training. While at Sumner, she became a contralto soloist with the A Cappella Choir. Among her many appearances with the choir was as soloist when the choir performed with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra in concert. She received favorable comments from this performance.<sup>13</sup>

Miss Bumbry won the local contest sponsored by the Saint Louis Music Association held in 1953, and later that year won first prize in the National contest of the National Association of Negro Musicians, Incorporated held in Indianapolis, Indiana. This was a cash scholarship award. She also won first prize at the 'Teen O'Clock Time' radio talent contest sponsored by Scruggs Vandervoort



and Barney and Motorola, held over Radio Station KMOX in 1954. This was a cash award. Curt Ray, local disc jockey on the Teen O'Clock Time program, became interested in Miss Bumbry and was responsible for her appearance on the Godfrey Program. The talent contest (local) lasted twenty weeks and the contestants were students from the various high schools in the Saint Louis area.

The Zeta Phi Beta Sorority also became interested in the musical career of Grace Bumbry and from receipts of various musical affairs, they have contributed liberally towards her music education and development.

After graduation from Sumner High School, Miss Bumbry entered the Music School of Boston University. She later attended Northwestern University and more recently enrolled at the Music Academy of the West at Santa Barbara, California where she was under the personal tutelage of Lotte Lehman, internationally known singer.

When Miss Bumbry appeared as guest soloist at the morning service held at Antioch Baptist Church in Saint Louis on June the 23rd, 1957, the following excerpt from a letter was read by Pastor Reverend James E. Cook, which was written by Lotte Lehman:

"I don't know really how to describe the voice of Grace Bumbry. I am convinced that she stands on the threshold of a world career and I am not given to exaggeration. She is, by the way, a protegee of Marian Anderson."<sup>14</sup>



Much is expected of Miss Bumbry in the field of music, and from her performances while still in the development stage, many authorities including Marian Anderson, who has shown a personal interest in her, feel that international acclaim will come to her.

Among other awards received by Miss Bumbry was the Marian Anderson Award, presented by a group of Philadelphia citizens to promising singers.

Her present plans are for further study in Vienna and concertizing in Europe.

The following news article tells of one of her most recent achievements:

"Miss Grace Bumbry, young Saint Louis mezzo-soprano, has been awarded an opportunity fellowship by the John Hay Whitney Foundation for study and coaching with the Vienna State Opera Company, it was announced today in New York.

Miss Bumbry, a Negro, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Bumbry, 1705 Goode Avenue. She won a \$1,000 award last March in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air. In 1954 she was a hit on the Arthur Godfrey radio-television show. She will spend a year with the Vienna Company.<sup>12</sup>

#### Gwendolyn Belle - 1936

In the progress and development of any musical movement, the teacher-parent as well as the parent-child association plays an important part. Into this pattern falls the movement of the Negro in Music in Saint Louis. The encouragement and inspiration the parent or the



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teacher conveys to the pupil has played as important a role perhaps as the instructions which are necessary for further development.

An example of this encouragement and inspiration is the close association of Mrs. Jewell Belle and her daughter Miss Gwendolyn Belle. In this case the mother has proven to be not only a devoted parent but also as an interested 'friend' and a musical inspiration.

Mrs. Belle began her musical career as a member of a church choir. While at Sumner High School she benefited from the instructions of Major M. Clark Smith, an important figure in this movement. Her musical interest and activities proved to be an incentive to her daughter.<sup>16</sup>

The first musical ambition of Miss Belle was to be a concert pianist. This was a result of the encouragement of her mother who began the daughter's musical instruction at the age of four by giving her piano lessons. The mother also organized a family trio and promoted musical activities in the household.

Soon afterwards the daughter entered Sumner High School, the alma mater of the mother, and gave up the idea of becoming a concert pianist as she became more and more interested in singing. At Sumner she became a member of the Girls Glee Club under the direction of Willette Jeffries Haley and later was selected to become a member of the A Cappella Choir under the direction of Kenneth Brown



Billups. Upon entering the choir, her voice attracted the attention of Billups, and he encouraged training. Miss Belle studied with Billups for a period of three years. Billups encouraged further training for the purpose of continued development of this voice which showed great possibilities and a bright musical future for Miss Belle. She soon became one of the leading soloists with the choir. During her third year at Sumner she had obtained the ambition to become a concert singer and possibly an opera performer. Billups applied to various universities for possibilities of assistance in the furthering of her musical training and education.

A workshop offer was received from Boston University. This offer was accepted. The cultural environment of Boston was one of the factors in this decision, which proved to be a wise one.

Many opportunities were afforded Miss Belle in the Boston area which she took advantage of, such as singing with church choirs, for various community clubs, and for many church organizations.

Among her church singing activities were as hired contralto soloist at the Winchester Baptist Church in Winchester, Massachusetts and at the Second Congregational Church in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

This workshop granted by Boston University developed



into various scholarships for Miss Belle because of her achievements as a student and singer at the university and in the Boston area. She was presented by the university in concerts in Boston. She was soloist in the New England premier of Carl Orf's 'Carmina Burana' which featured the university orchestra and chorus. She was also soloist in a university presentation of 'Mathis der Maler' by Paul Hindemith, which was highly acclaimed by the critics.<sup>17</sup> Her performances in these and other presentations resulted in other commitments in Boston and in New York. Among these was a concert appearance at Carnegie Hall in New York which had as its orchestral director Leopold Stokowski. As a result of this performance, Stokowski gave her a letter of reference and compliments which she values highly.

Another result of her performances was a letter received from the Civic Center of New York to come there to audition for their proposed production of 'Carmen Jones' written by William Hammerstein and associates based on the opera 'Carmen' by George Bizet. The university excused Miss Belle from classes to make this audition.

Upon arrival in New York for the audition, she sang for Hammerstein and his assistants and was given a score of 'Carmen Jones' with a script of dialogue. She was asked to learn three arias in English and two scenes. (She had previously sung the role of 'Carmen' in French



in a university production of the opera). The next day she was auditioned again and later called in the office of Hammerstein and advised that she had been selected to sing the role of 'Carmen Jones' alternatively with Muriel Smith, a long established concert artist. Miss Belle received wide publicity from this achievement. Among the many news releases was the following:

"Newcomer - Mark down first that Gwendolyn Belle has been signed as the alternate for Muriel Smith in the revival of 'Carmen Jones' at the Civic Center. Then note that history appears to be playing a return engagement with the musical. When Billy Rose originally produced the show, it was realized that one singer could not meet the scores, strenuous vocal requirements through eight consecutive performances.

The aforementioned Miss Belle, after 100 other candidates failed, was discovered by Michael Shurtleff at Boston University. Mr. Shurtleff, productive assistant to Director William Hammerstein, personally paid her fare to come to New York. She was heard by Mr. Hammerstein and approved."<sup>18</sup>

Miss Belle appeared with this production until the run concluded in June of 1956. She returned to Boston University in the Fall of that year and resumed her studies. Now having finished her work at Boston University she has returned to Boston for purposes of appearing in concerts in that area, etc. She has also become affiliated with a professional opera company in the Boston vicinity.



High School. When Music in the Schools Spirit Corps Integrated

In 1955 he was transferred to the Hadley Technical High

### William Paul Overby

Among the latest additions to the music programs in the schools of Saint Louis is William Paul Overby who came to Vashon High School as instrumental music instructor and assistant band director in 1950. Overby, a native of Indianapolis, Indiana received his advanced education at the Alabama State Teachers College of Montgomery, Alabama and Northwestern University from where he received a Bachelors and Masters degree. Previous to coming to Saint Louis he was music instructor at the West Virginia State Teachers College. When Henderson was transferred to the Soldan High School in 1954, Overby became band director at Vashon, a position he still holds.

Among his community activities is as choir director at the Centennial Christian Church.

### George Van Hoy Collins

Another of the more recently employed music instructors in the public schools of Saint Louis is George Van Hoy Collins. For a resume of his musical education and activities plus a review of a concert given by the Hadley Technical High School Choir which he directs see Appendix XXVI.

Collins came during this period and became music instructor and choir director at the Washington Technical



High School. When the high schools in Saint Louis integrated in 1955 he was transferred to the Hadley Technical High School, where he is currently in the same capacity.

### Thelma Lewis

Another of the Saint Louis born musicians currently employed in the Saint Louis Public School System is Thelma Lewis. She is a special teacher of instrumental music in the Saint Louis Elementary Schools.

Miss Lewis received her preparatory training in the Saint Louis School System graduating from Sumner High School where she received instructions from Ulysses Chambres. While in high school she also attended the Kroeger School of Music where she studied music theory and composition. Among her piano instructors were Elmer Keaton and Gerald Tyler.

She received further training at the New England Conservatory of Music where she enrolled in the Public School Music Supervisors Course with organ as an additional subject. She also attended Boston University where she received an advanced degree. As part of the requirements for a Masters degree from Boston University, she chose for the title of her thesis 'Twenty-Five Negro Spirituals Arranged for use in the Schools, Grades Four Through Twelve, With Explanatory Notes and Illustrations.'<sup>20</sup>

While in Boston, Miss Lewis studied piano with John Orth, considered the last known living pupil of



Franz Liszt. Orth accepted her as a pupil after she had been highly recommended. As part of payment for piano lessons from him, she did secretarial work. He was so impressed by her playing that he gave her a \$100.00 scholarship to aid in her work at Boston University.

After teaching in Arkansas and Florida, Miss Lewis accepted her first job in Saint Louis as a music teacher at Stowe Teacher's College where she worked in the adult education program. (I was one of her students at Stowe Teacher's College).

Before being appointed to her present position, Miss Lewis also instructed at the Franklin High School in Saint Charles, Missouri, at the Turner School in Kirkwood, Missouri, and at the Saint Joseph Catholic High School in Saint Louis.

Miss Lewis has organized many musical groups among the students from the various elementary schools in Saint Louis and they have often made appearances in concert performances.

#### Alberta Douglas Gantt

The work of the music supervisors and consultants in the Saint Louis Public School System has been of tremendous value to the music programs in the schools.

The Negroes hired in this capacity have made their contributions and have done their part in the continued



development of this musical movement. Individuals employed in this capacity have been chosen because of their capability and preparation. In most cases native Saint Louisans have been appointed.

Among the supervisors who have come from other municipalities is Alberta Douglas Gantt. She became vocal elementary music consultant here in 1954 after serving in various other musical capacities in the Saint Louis area and in other sections of the country.

She is a native of Kansas City, Missouri and was educated in the preparatory schools of Saint Joseph, Missouri. She furthered her education at the University of Kansas where she obtained an advanced degree.

Among her previous music experiences were as:

1. Head of the Department of Music at the Swift Junior College of Rogersville, Tennessee.
2. High school teacher and elementary supervisor of Negro Schools at Boley, Oklahoma
3. High school teacher at Washington High School of Carruthersville, Missouri
4. Instructor of music at Lincoln University Extension School - Jefferson City, Missouri

She first held a position in the Saint Louis area in 1937 when she became elementary music teacher at the Lincoln School in Richmond Heights, Saint Louis County.

She was appointed state supervisor of Negro schools by the State Department of Jefferson City,



Missouri. She served in that capacity until 1946. In the latter part of 1946, she returned to Saint Louis to become music instructor at Stowe Teachers College, a position she retained until 1954 when she was employed in her present position by the Saint Louis Board of Education.

Other Negro consultants in the Saint Louis school system include Eva Bolar Fischer, Herman Morgan, and O'Hara Spearman, recently appointed to fill the vacancy of the late Ethel Huffman.

#### NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION U.S.A. INC' MUSICALE

The 74th annual session of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc. was held in Saint Louis from September 7th til September 12, 1954 and the pre-convention musicale held at Kiel Auditorium featured choirs from the many Baptist churches in the vicinity.

A 1,000 voice chorus was organized from the choirs in the area, and this choir was the feature attraction at the musicale. The directors of the choir were Regina Steele Nance, choir director of the Washington Tabernacle Baptist Church, and Kenneth Brown Billups, minister of music at Antioch Baptist Church. Associate directors were Johnnie Howard Franklin, nationally known gospel singer, John B. Jett, Joshua E. Gentry, and Aaron B. Windom.

Organists included Herlee Allen, Oscar Long,



Clara Etta Smith, J. Roy Terry, Alleda Ward Wells, and William A. White. Pianists included Lillian E. Campbell, Manual Carter, Dorothy Crockett, Kenneth Miller, Marjorie Olive, Dorothy Taylor and Thelma Brown Waters.

The chorus performed many traditional church hymns, spirituals, anthems, gospel songs and such standard vocal selections as Mozart's "Gloria" from the Twelfth Mass, and "Inflammatus" by Rossini.

I was the orchestral arranger and conductor of a twenty piece orchestra which included many of the leading Negro musicians of the city and a string section composed of members of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra.

#### Washington University

Among institutes of higher learning in Saint Louis that opened its doors to Negro students during this period on the undergraduate as well as the graduate level was Washington University.

This afforded the Negro music students seeking to further their training and musical education an opportunity to attend an accredited university and take advantage of educational facilities which before had not been available in Saint Louis.

I was one of the first to take advantage of this, entering the Washington University Department of Music in 1952. I feel certain that others who were my classmates



and associates, along with those who have followed me, have benefited from the musical training received from the Music Department of Washington University.

Many of the students and graduates of this school seem headed for successful careers in the field of music. Among these students are:

1. Vivian Wilkerson piano student who was recipient of a Fulbright grant for study abroad during the academic year 1957-58. After proving herself a deserving student with talent, and graduating from Washington University where she studied piano with William Schatzkamer and performed as piano soloist at various musical events, she took advantage of this opportunity and went to Norway to study piano at the University of Oslo.<sup>21</sup>

2. Frankie Weathers, who received her first college training at Washington University after having graduated from Vashon High School where she appeared often as soprano soloist with the school choir under the direction of Ruth Green. She became soloist with the Washington University Choir under the direction of Dr. Leigh Gerdine.

On January 27, 1957 at Tulsa, Oklahoma, Miss Weathers was winner of first prize at the Metropolitan Regional Auditions. This was sponsored by the Metropolitan Opera Association, and afforded her the opportunity to go to New York and compete for another prize and honor. In New York on April the 19th of that year, Miss Weathers was awarded the \$500.00 second prize scholarship award in the annual Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air. This competition was sponsored by the Metropolitan Opera Association and the American Broadcasting Company.



3. Elvis O'Hara Spearman, native of Florida who received his masters degree from Columbia University, and is a candidate for a doctorate degree from the Department of Music of Washington University. He recently was appointed by the Saint Louis Board of Education as instrumental music instructor for many of the elementary schools of the city.

4. Oliver Edward Nelson, who after proving himself to be one of the outstanding musicians in the jazz field, has shown promise of becoming a composer of serious music. Some of his compositions have been performed by chamber music groups from the university. Musicians Union Local No. 197 presented a concert of chamber music featuring his compositions in February of 1957.

Two other students of Washington University, Olly Wilson and Hugh Ellison became members of the Saint Louis Philharmonic Orchestra for the 1958-59 season. Wilson, performer on bass viol, and Ellison, trombonist, have the distinction of being among the few Negroes in this city to perform with a recognized instrumental group in the classical idiom.

9. According to information obtained from Lellie Stoner during an interview
10. For comments on this concert appearance and a detailed account of the earlier musical life of Helen Phillips see Appendix XXIII.
11. For news article concerning this concert, and other facts concerning Helen Phillips, See Appendix XXIV.
12. For articles concerning appearances of Grace Bunery on the Arthur Godfrey Show see Appendix XXV.



## FOOTNOTES for CHAPTER V

13. According to information and comments from Bumbry.
1. For a complete history of the musical career of Robert McFerrin see Appendix XXI.
14. This was a portion of a letter written by Lettie Stoner to Mrs. Joseph Williams of Saint Louis.
2. Burke, Harry
15. Saint Louis Globe Democrat  
February 19, 1940
3. According to information obtained from Bennie Easter during interview August 7, 1956.
4. Chicago Musical College Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 2  
September, 1950 edition.
5. According to information obtained from Haynes during an interview on August the 15th, 1956.
6. In many Negro churches, one of the members during the services begins an old hymn or a spiritual and the congregation joins the song. The piano player has to pick out the key and play along with the congregational singing. Often the singers change the key during the singing of the song, and the pianist has to develop his ear so as to make the sudden key changes to keep the song going.
7. According to additional information obtained during an interview on September 19, 1958
8. For information from news article following her Town Hall debut see Appendix XXII.
9. According to information obtained from Lettie Stoner during an interview
10. For comments on this concert appearance and a detailed account of the earlier musical life of Helen Phillips see Appendix XXIII.
11. For news article concerning this concert, and other facts concerning Helen Phillips, See Appendix XXIV.
12. For articles concerning appearance of Grace Bumbry on the Arthur Godfrey Show see Appendix XXV.



13. According to information and comments from Kenneth Brown Billups concerning Grace Bumbry.
14. This was a portion of a letter written by Lottie Lehman to Mrs. Jacob Williams of Saint Louis.
15. This article appeared in the June 15, 1958 edition of the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch.
16. According to information obtained during interview with Jewell and Gwendolyn Belle on July 13, 1956.
17. According to information received from Gwendolyn Belle during additional interview.
18. This article appeared in the May 27th, 1956 issue of the New York Herald Tribune.
19. According to information obtained from Jewell Belle.
20. This thesis put into book form has been accepted by a literary agent in Boston (Lucille Gulliver) for publication after revisions.
21. Following this course of study Vivian Wilkerson has returned to Washington University as a teaching assistant to William Schatzkamer.



## CHAPTER VI

### JAZZ AND THE SAINT LOUIS NEGRO AS A JAZZ MUSICIAN

#### Introductory Resume of Negro Jazz Musicians in Saint Louis

In the development of jazz, the Negro musicians of Saint Louis have played an important part.

It is known that there were capable Negro jazz musicians in Saint Louis just after the Civil War. A left handed 'fiddler' named Tabeau was one of these musicians. He had one of the leading groups in the city consisting of his fiddle, a cornetist, pianist, drummer, and trombonist. This group performed at many affairs in and around Saint Louis.<sup>1</sup>

There was also a lady pianist, 'Mammy Lou', who played at a bordello located at 210 South Sixth Street. George S. Johns, on the staff of the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch took Paderewski, noted concert pianist, to hear her perform after one of his concerts in Saint Louis. Paderewski was impressed. Among the songs he had her sing over and over again was 'Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay'. He paid her a nice compliment after the performance.<sup>2</sup>

When ragtime was the rage, Saint Louis was an important center. Scott Joplin, known to many as one of the greatest exponents of ragtime, both as a pianist and composer, settled in Saint Louis and did most of his composing and playing here. His composition "Maple Leaf



Rag" was one of the first published rags, and is thought by many to be one of the leading ragtime compositions.

*his trump* The coming to Saint Louis of the late W. C. Handy was another of the significant incidents as far as popular music was concerned. From his experience in Saint Louis, he was inspired to compose the "Saint Louis Blues", still the most popular and well-known of the blues.

*the field* When riverboat jazz was popular, Saint Louis was an important center. Located on the Mississippi River, many musicians came up the river from New Orleans and Memphis and settled in Saint Louis. One of the most prominent of these was the late Fate Marable who came here on one of the excursion steamers and established himself as a nationally known jazz personality. Many of the leading jazz musicians performed in one or more of the groups organized by Fate Marable. Perhaps the most well known was Louis Armstrong.

*of the* Another individual who has played an eminent part in the establishment of Saint Louis as a jazz center is Dewey Jackson, who has also played on the riverboats as a trumpet player and leader. Through the years, he has been prominently featured in and around Saint Louis. There have been many musicians who began their musical careers as a member of one of the groups formed by Jackson and continued their playing to attain national prominence in the field of jazz.



The late Charles Creath, another of the jazz pioneers of Saint Louis, created quite a sensation with his trumpet playing. He was also a riverboat or chestra leader.

The Jeter-Pillars Orchestra, under the co-leadership of James Jeter and Hayes Pillars, came to Saint Louis in 1934 and established a name for themselves in the field of jazz. During their stay at the Club Plantation here, the personnel of the orchestra included many musicians who have made a name for themselves in popular music. (See pages **338-346**)

Other leaders such as Harvey Langford, Bennie Washington, Eddie Randle, Eddie Johnson, Chick Finney, Oliver Cobb and Cecil White, have given evidence of the calibre of jazz musicianship which existed among the Negro jazz musicians of Saint Louis.

More recently orchestras under the leadership of the late LaValle 'Buggs' Roberts and George Hudson, have carried on the work of the earlier jazz pioneers of this musical movement. Hudson is credited for the further development of musicians formerly members of his orchestra who have attained prominence in the field of jazz. (See pages **354-358**)

Among the many musicians who have performed in Saint Louis jazz groups and have attained national prominence include:



1. Eugene Cedric, who was featured for many years as saxophonist with the late and great 'Fats Waller.

2. Irvin Randolph, trumpeter formerly with the Cab Calloway Orchestra.

3. Carl George, who performed on trumpet with such leaders as Artie Shaw, Stan Kenton, Count Basie and Woody Herman.

4. Harold Baker, formerly featured trumpet player with Lucky Millender and Teddy Wilson among other groups and currently with the Duke Ellington Orchestra.

5. Leon Spann, for many years bass viol player with the Buddy Johnson Orchestra.

6. Arvell Shaw, former bass viol player with Louis Armstrong, and Teddy Wilson groups, and currently featured with the Benny Goodman group.

7. The late Jimmy Blanton, former bass viol player with Duke Ellington, who set a new standard for jazz bass viol performers. (See page **351**)

8. The late Sidney Catlett, former member of the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra, who before his untimely death was considered as one of the greatest drummers in this music idiom.

9. Wendell Marshall, former bass viol performer with Duke Ellington Orchestra, and currently a resident of New York City. (See page **358**)

10. Clark Terry, Trumpet player formerly with George Hudson, Charlie Barnet, Count Basie and currently with the Duke Ellington Orchestra. (See page **360**)

11. Ernest 'Ernie' Wilkins, who after playing saxophone with Saint Louis groups has become one of the leading jazz arrangers. (See page **361**)



12. Miles Davis, who has become one of the leading trumpet players in the modern jazz vein (See page **353**)

In the recent revival of dixieland music, Saint Louis has kept abreast with other sections of the country. This return to an older form of jazz, gave a new lift to many of the older musicians here such as Dewey Jackson, Thomas Perryman, Norman Mason, Joseph Patterson and Elijah W. Shaw, as the style of music many of them played during their development period became popular again. Singleton Palmer, who had returned to Saint Louis after touring with the Count Basie Orchestra as bass viol player, organized a dixieland band which included many of the former jazz leaders in this area and by their performances led the way for the forming of other such groups. Palmer featured himself on bass tuba. (See page **368** ) Bands under the leadership of Joe Smith and William 'Bill' Martin have also performed around Saint Louis in the dixieland idiom.

The accomplishments of the previously mentioned jazz musicians have paved the way for other Saint Louis musicians.

Eras of Jazz in Saint Louis and Outstanding Negro Musicians  
Who Helped Develop the Movement

### Ragtime in Saint Louis

Saint Louis was considered the 'cradle of ragtime', a form of popular music which had its beginning near the end



of the 19th century and gave way to a more modern form of jazz around 1900.

As related in Chapter I, ragtime evolved as a piano version of a new kind of music which grew from a heritage of spirituals, and plantation melodies, work songs, military marches and country dances. Ragtime, as did most of the early forms of jazz, supposedly began in New Orleans, but the style was brought up the Mississippi River by many performers who settled in Saint Louis, and Saint Louis soon became the 'ragtime capitol' of the world.

"Down in New Orleans this music was influenced by the French brass band tradition. It was blown through cornets, clarinets, and slide trombones by the marching society bands at dances and street parades - even at funerals. Eight hundred miles up the Mississippi in Saint Louis, this same kind of music was hammered out on hundreds of uprights pianos. Here the style reached full maturity under the nimble fingers of masters like Scott Joplin and such other near-legendary figures as Tom Turpin, James Scott, Louis Chauvin and Charlie Thompson."<sup>3</sup>

### Scott Joplin

Undoubtedly one of the most prominent figures in the development of ragtime music was Scott Joplin, a piano player who came to Saint Louis in 1885, at the age of seventeen, from Sedalia, Missouri.

"By the time Joplin came to Saint Louis the city had grown from an 18th century



French trading post into a growing levee city that fronted a broad Mississippi River swarmed with rafts, steamboats and kept boats lined up for miles which brought in work gangs, roustabouts, cattlemen, rivermen and all sorts of characters from other riverboat cities. All along the levee could be heard chants of work songs, levee blues and the shouts of the roustabouts 'coon-jining' to the plinking of banjos."<sup>4</sup>

During this time one of the most prosperous sections of the city was the district called Chestnut Valley which began from the levee front. Chestnut and Market were very notorious streets in this district where saloons and brothels were many. This was a haven for musicians and professional gamblers.

Perhaps the most frequented of the saloons in Chestnut Valley was the Rosebud Cafe owned by Thomas Milton Turpin. Turpin was one of the most popular men in the area, because besides being owner of the Rosebud Cafe he was a ragtime pianist and composer. Most of the ragtime piano players were constant visitors to this establishment. Scott Joplin was one of these, and soon he and Turpin became the best of friends.

For eight years Saint Louis was home for Scott Joplin. When he was not playing along Chestnut or Market Street, he was playing in some nearby town. In 1893 he ventured as far as Chicago, but returned to Saint Louis with a new acquaintance, Otis Saunders, who became interested



in Joplin and became his musical advisor and manager.<sup>5</sup> Joplin continued to play and compose ragtime music in and around Saint Louis. He often appeared in such towns as Columbia, Jefferson City, Hannibal, Sedalia and across the river in East Saint Louis, Illinois

The year 1899 was an eventful one in the life of Scott Joplin, for this year he met another of his admirers, John Stark. John Stark heard Joplin play at the Maple Leaf Club in Sedalia. Joplin played one of his original compositions which he entitled the 'Maple Leaf Rag' for Stark, who was so impressed that he bought the tune for \$50.00 and royalties for the composer. The number was printed in Saint Louis and went on sale in late September of that year. The only promotion of the song was by Joplin himself who played this original rag at the counters in the music stores owned by the Stark family. The song became popular immediately, and in a few years thousands of copies of sheet music were sold. Because of the volume of sales John Stark moved to Saint Louis to set up a large publishing house.

By this time, the ragtime craze was spreading all over the country. Largely responsible for this was the playing of Scott Joplin and the popularity of the 'Maple Leaf Rag'.

"The big publishers east, north and west were publishing anything they had as ragtime. Many pseudo-rags and old



unsyncopated schottishes, quadrilles and marches were republished with the word ragtime hastily overprinted on the cover or title page."<sup>6</sup>

As John Stark settled in Saint Louis in 1900, 'Maple Leaf Rag' had made him potentially the leading ragtime publisher in the country. He bought a large printing plant at 3615 Laclede Avenue. This proved very profitable, and other rags were bought and published.

Other ragtime compositions of Scott Joplin are 'Sunflower Drag', 'Peach<sup>a</sup>rine Rag', and the 'Augustan Club Waltz'. These were also published by Stark. Scott Hayden collaborated with Joplin in the writing of these songs.

The financial success enjoyed by Joplin as a result of 'Maple Leaf Rag' and other compositions prompted him to settle down. In 1903, now a married man, he withdrew from active participation in music and activities around the saloons. Retiring from playing the piano, he began teaching ragtime to many of his admirers.

While Joplin was in semi-retirement and reaping benefits from his compositions other ragtime piano players came into prominence. Besides Tom Turpin, Louis Chauvin, Joe Jordan, Sam Patterson, Bob and John Moore and Charlie Warfield were among the leading performers. Sam Patterson and Louis Chauvin were native Saint Louisans, former students at Alexander Dumas Elementary School,



The desire and encouragement of his colleagues to have him to continue to play resulted in Joplin appearing now and then. His desire to put 'class' in ragtime that would compare with serious European music became prevalent. He wished to exploit this type of popular music. The compositions which followed, 'Original Rags', 'The Strenuous Life', and 'The Entertainer' exemplified Joplin's new feelings.<sup>7</sup>

In continuing his desire to compose serious ragtime music, Joplin wrote a ragtime opera, 'A Guest of Honor'. This work, the first endeavor of this stature by Joplin, also proved to be his first disappointment. The opera was performed only once in Saint Louis and reaped no benefit to the composer. Lost in the mail while being sent to Washington D.C. to be copyrighted, the opera was never published.

The unfortunate experiences of this ragtime opera, considered by Joplin as his most important work, were extremely disheartening to him and undoubtedly marked the beginning of the end of Joplin's musical prominence in Saint Louis.

In 1906, Joplin left Saint Louis and went to Chicago. He left behind a divorced wife, a developing music style and many admirers and pupils.

He only stayed in Chicago for a short while and moved east to settle in New York. While in New York he



recorded a number of his compositions on piano rolls, went on vaudeville tours billed as 'The King of Ragtime pianist. Composers', and continued his composing.

'Tremonishia', the second ragtime opera written by Scott Joplin was completed in 1911.<sup>8</sup> It contained twenty-seven complete musical numbers, and was performed only once. This musical work which had consumed so much of his time and energy was also considered a failure by Joplin. It proved to be another hard blow, one which he never overcame.

Scott Joplin died on April 1, 1917 at the Manhattan State Hospital, located on Wards Island in the East River, New York. Before the funeral, his second wife remembered a request he had made years before. This request was that the 'Maple Leaf Rag' be played at his funeral. When the time came, she said no. Thus ended the life of perhaps the greatest ragtime composer and the leader of this phase of popular music.

#### Tom Turpin and Other Ragtime Composers and Pianists

With the departure of Scott Joplin from Saint Louis, Turpin and other Saint Louis pianists kept up the ragtime movement.

Thomas Milton Turpin, born in Savannah, Georgia in 1873, moved to Saint Louis in the early 1880's. He later opened his saloon, 'The Rosebud' at 2230 Market compose and play. Later Maltbourn and Turpin combined their



Street where he developed into one of the leading ragtime pianists in Saint Louis. Turpin was a self-taught pianist.

"As a business man and deputy constable Turpin was a busy person, but found time to compose as well as play ragtime. Between 1899 and 1917 he composed such ragtime songs as:

'Harlem Rag'  
'Pan American Rag'  
'Bucktime Ragtime Nightmare'  
'Saint Louis Rag' (which he wrote for the World's Fair)  
'Buffalo Rag'  
'Siwash Indian Rag'  
'Nannette Waltz'  
'When Sambo Goes to France' (which he wrote during World War I)"<sup>9</sup>

In addition to these compositions, Turpin wrote other rags, waltzes and song skits for weekly programs at his brother's tent show. The tent later became the Booker Washington Theatre, also located in Chestnut Valley.

Unlike Joplin, none of his compositions were ever published. <sup>not true</sup>

Among other composers and pianists prominent in the Saint Louis school of ragtime musicians were Artie Matthews, Robert Hampton, Charles Thompson and Conroy Casey.

Hampton, self-taught, came to Saint Louis from Little Rock, Arkansas. Among his compositions were 'The Doging Rag', 'Cataract Rag' and the 'Agitation Rag'.

Artie Matthews came to Saint Louis in 1904 during the Fair. While here he heard and was impressed by the playing of Joplin and Turpin and decided to settle here to compose and play. Later Matthews and Turpin combined their



talents and wrote music for musical and variety shows staged at the Booker Washington Theatre. This was around 1913.

Negro vaudeville was now becoming popular, and the Booker Washington Theatre, where Josephine Baker began her career, became one of the prominent show places of America. Featured at this theatre were such head-liners as Ethel Waters, Butterbeans and Susie, Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Ida Cox and Mamie Smith. Much of the music for these artists and their acts was written by Matthews and Turpin.<sup>10</sup>

Artie Matthews also wrote music for another leading showplace in Saint Louis during this time - The Princess Roadhouse. Many of these compositions were published. They included:

1. "The Princess France"
2. "When I'm Gone"
3. "Lucky Dan"
4. "My Gambling Man"
5. "Pastime Rag Number 1 and Number 2"

Also, around this time, Matthews arranged a musical composition entitled 'Baby Seal Blues' which was said to have been the first published composition to have the word 'blues' in its title.<sup>11</sup>

The ability of Matthews to write scores enabled him to prepare many rags for publication by Stark. He is known to have set down Robert Hamptons' "Cataract Rag" and also 'The Lily Rag' written by Charlie Thompson.



In 1915 Stark announced to his composers that he wanted a blues number to compete with the fast selling "Saint Louis Blues" of W.C. Handy. In the competition Matthews' number was chosen, and it was published the same year with the title of "Weary Blues". It became a hit and according to Matthews, he still receives royalties from it.<sup>12</sup>

The year the "Weary Blues" was published, the District around Chestnut Valley was gradually closing and Matthews decided it was time to get out of ragtime. He soon left Saint Louis.

"As Artie Matthews departed, a quarter century or more of Saint Louis ragtime was drawing to a close. The District was shuttered like most of the districts everywhere. Some of the players scattered. Of those who remained, some in a few years were playing for small wages where they could, while others eventually got out of music altogether. It had been a lot of fun; it had been a brilliant and productive time, but it was over."<sup>13</sup>

When Tom Turpin died in 1922, the ragtime days in Saint Louis were really through.

#### Charlie Thompson - 1891

One of the few ragtime pianists who was prominent when this phase of music was the rage, and still a resident of Saint Louis, is Charles Thompson.

During my interview with Thompson, he discussed with great enjoyment this musical era in Saint Louis.



Thompson, a native of Saint Louis, was educated in the Saint Louis Public School System attending the Banneker, L'Overture and Dumas Elementary schools. He also attended preparatory school at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Thompson began playing the piano at the age of 11. He never took music lessons and considers himself a self-made musician.

In 1916 Thompson wrote the "Lily Rag". Artie Matthews arranged the number for him and the Stark Music Publishing Company published it. Thompson related that Ralph Sutton, noted Saint Louis pianist currently performing in New York, still features this composition.

One of the most interesting portions of the interview was the discussion of the ragtime piano contest held in 1916 at the Booker Washington Theatre. Thompson said the contest lasted for four weeks. It began with 68 contestants and was judged on ragtime styles, improvisation and interpretation. After the show at the theatre, three names were drawn out of a hat. Each number contained the name of one of the contestants. The three pianists would play and at each show, two would be eliminated. After each night of the contest, the previous winner would act as time keeper for the next three who played, as speed was another factor in determining the winner. The last three contestants were Owen Marshall, Paul Sedric and Charles Thompson. Thompson was declared the winner.



After winning this contest, the public demanded that Thompson play against Tom Turpin. Turpin had won such contests throughout the state since Scott Joplin had left Saint Louis. This contest was held in Saint Louis and again Charles Thompson was the winner. For winning this contest, Thompson was awarded a \$169.00 gold medal and about \$350.00 in cash.

By going to the eastern section of the states, Thompson came in contact with such prominent pianists as James J. Johnson, who had a great influence on his playing, and Lucky Roberts. When Thompson played in Buffalo, New York he was the only Negro performing on 'Broadway' in Buffalo for one year. Among other cities he played in were Cleveland, Detroit, Toledo and New York City.

Mentioning other outstanding pianists during this era Thompson named Walter Farrington, Robert Hampton, John Arnold, Mike Scott, Raymond Hines, George Goins and Sonny Anderson. In further discussion of pianists, James P. Johnson was again mentioned as his greatest influence and Artie Matthews as having the fastest executions he has ever heard.

As the ragtime era gradually ended, Thompson continued his playing in and around Saint Louis, performing in many of the night clubs. He mentioned also that after ragtime, the music slowed up somewhat and pepped up again during the era of 'bebop', the forerunner of modern jazz.



From his contacts made during his active period of music, Charles Thompson had many friends throughout the country, and won many admirers. Among these is Kay Thompson, performer on radio and television, who regularly corresponds with Thompson keeping him abreast with the national and international musical happenings.

Thompson has made appearances in Saint Louis at meetings of the Saint Louis Jazz Club and has appeared in concert at Washington University.

#### William Christopher Handy - 1873-1958

After the ragtime era had reached its peak and begun to decline in popularity, the blues came into prominence. Before, the blues was a rather crude form of folk song, but by this time it had reached a standardized form. The one individual who did most to popularize the blues was the late William Christopher Handy, more commonly known as W.C. Handy, the "Father of the Blues". Although he was not a native Saint Louisan and did not spend much time in Saint Louis, the fact that his composition "Saint Louis Blues" is without a doubt the most popular of the blues songs, and one of the most performed of popular songs, Handy is included in this chapter which is primarily devoted to jazz movement in Saint Louis.

As has been mentioned in a previous chapter, it was Handy who first appreciated the universal appeal of



the Negro blues, and introduced into American popular music the qualities of these folk songs. Handy wrote some of the first, and later several of the most famous of the published blues, thereby starting a musical revolution, a fundamental change in the character of the popular music of America, comparable only to that brought about by the introduction of ragtime.

One of the first tunes written by W.C. Handy that attained national recognition was "Memphis Blues", originally called "Mister Crump", written for E.H. Crump in 1909 when he was a candidate for Mayor of Memphis, Tennessee. The song became an immediate success and the popularity of it was a factor in Crump winning the election and becoming Mayor of Memphis and Handy becoming a national favorite.<sup>14</sup>

According to Handy:

"The Memphis Blues was the first of all the many published blues, and it set a new fashion in American popular music and contributed to the rise of jazz, or, if you prefer, swing, and even boogie-woogie."<sup>15</sup>

The "Memphis Blues", although it soon became a national favorite, netted Handy very little financially because of his ignorance of the many complications concerning copyrights and song publishing.

The "Saint Louis Blues" was inspired by many unhappy, poverty stricken, but memorable days Handy spent



in Saint Louis. He first came here in 1893 with a quartette he had organized in Birmingham, Alabama. The group came to Saint Louis because they had heard of the prosperity enjoyed here by other musicians and the activities in Chestnut Valley. Handy's quartette, as many other such groups which had come here from various sections of the country, did not prosper, and eventually disbanded.

Many lean days followed for Handy. He found part time jobs that did not last, and spent many nights sleeping on the cobble stones of the levee of the Mississippi River. Between times of avoiding the policemen, who kept quite busy arresting vagrants, he began wandering around the streets near the levee. As written by Handy in his publication "Father of the Blues":

"One night, in my destitution, I stood outside a white saloon attracted by the music of a singer who accompanied himself on a guitar. I stopped to listen because the song was 'Afterwards' - the second verse had always appealed to me. ('Sometimes my heart grows weary of its sadness, sometimes my heart grows weary of its pain'). I forgot that I had no shirt under my coat, that I was a terrible sight and that I should have been unwanted in that place under any circumstances. After a moments hesitation I ventured inside. At first the bartender was inclined to be rough. When he found that I too could play the guitar and sing that as well as other songs, he changed his tone. When I had finished a second selection, the crowd in the saloon took up a collection, gave it to me and invited



me to come and sing often. I did not accept the invitation, but I did buy a change of clothing.

I have tried to forget that first sojourn to Saint Louis, but I wouldn't want to forget Targee Street as it was then. I don't think I'd want to forget the high-roller Stetson hats of the men or the diamonds the girls wore in their ears. Then there were those who sat for company in little plush parlors under gaslights. The prettiest woman I've ever seen I saw while I was down and out in Saint Louis. But mostly my trip was an excursion into the lower depths. I would not want to forget the Great Western Band.

Still, I have always felt that the misery of those days bore fruit in song. I have always imagined that a good bit of that hardship went into the making of the Saint Louis Blues, when much later, that whole song seemed to spring so easily out of nowhere, the work of a single evening at the piano. I like to think that that song reflects a life filled with hard times as well as good times."<sup>16</sup>

These experiences during his first venture to Saint Louis were depicted in W.C. Handy's composition "Saint Louis Blues". Such expressions as "Saint Louis woman with those diamond rings", "If it wasn't for powder and that store bought hair", describe sights he had seen in Saint Louis.

His many days and nights spent on the cobble stones of the levee on the Mississippi river front were impetus for the words, "I hate to see the evening sun go down". In an article which appeared in the Chicago American the following was written:



"One of the many nights he was jobless and broke he slept on the cold gray stones of the Saint Louis waterfront. Each night the damp rolling down the Mississippi wrapped a shivery blanket about him. Watching the sun sinking behind the Missouri's muddy flats and thoughts of another cold damp night ahead, inspired W.C. Handy to write, 'I hate to see that evenin' sun go down.'" <sup>17</sup>

Handy left Saint Louis with these many memories.

In spite of the hardships he encountered in the city, incidents and people here stayed on his mind.

"Saint Louis Blues" was completed in 1914, and was first performed at the Alaskan Roof in Memphis, Tennessee. The tune style, and words of the song attracted attention immediately and although a hit tune was predicted, possibly no one thought at that time that this composition would reach the status in American music it has attained.

Remembering the financial disasters that had occurred from other compositions, Handy was cautious in the handling of this song. He contacted a publishing company which agreed to print 10,000 copies of "Saint Louis Blues" for \$80.00. Handy worked for a week, and with money acquired sent \$20.00 to the publishing company and received 2,000 copies. He sold these copies for five cents per copy and eventually raised enough money to purchase the other copies.<sup>18</sup>

The remainder of the story of the "Saint Louis



"Blues" is musical history, for the popularity of the song has established blues as a standard form of popular music, and made Handy a musical and a financial success. He established a publishing house of his own, was a Class A member of the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for more than twenty years, drew royalties from the Saint Louis Blues and other compositions and at the time of his death in early 1958 was known the world over.

"Saint Louis Blues" has been performed in almost every way possible. In the newspaper release 'Our Own Oddities' it was cited that one radio station discovered it had 800 different arrangements of "Saint Louis Blues" to choose from for a 'W.C. Handy Hour'.<sup>19</sup>

"Saint Louis Blues" has been recorded by at least six stars of the Metropolitan Opera Company, John Alden Carpenter acknowledged his debt to Handy's music in his compositions. George Gershwin used a theme of "Saint Louis Blues" in his "Rhapsody in Blue".

It has been related that the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, had "Saint Louis Blues" played by the Royal Band every morning, and when Americans met an Ethiopian regiment in Africa, the time both were fighting the Italians, the American band, playing the "Star Spangled Banner" was met by the Ethiopians playing "Saint Louis Blues".<sup>20</sup>

Besides royalties from this composition received



in the United States, Handy also received royalties from Japan, Italy, France and England among other foreign countries.

Many of the facts already mentioned were discussed during personal interview by this writer with W. C. Handy at his home in Yonkers, New York on June the 18th, 1956. Handy discussed music from his early days to that day. He also spoke of the evolution of the blues. Being a deeply religious man, Handy spoke of the distinctions between the blues and Negro spirituals:

"Spirituals are Christian ideals and hopes based on an African structure of music. They express my people's dreams of a better world hereafter. But the blues are their hopes and dreams of a better world here on earth."

Handy mentioned the early jazz centers as New Orleans, for the first forms of jazz and dixieland, Memphis, Tennessee for the first home of the blues, and Saint Louis as the cradle of ragtime. In his opinion, other music centers branched from these cities.

He also spoke of his early education and musical training and the fact that his parents wanted him to become a Methodist minister and above all, not a musician. He mentioned again of his closeness to the music of the churches, and that the foundation of the blues comes from the music of the churches, noting that the flattened seventh is very prominent in the church hymns, which is also used



in popular music, is also a 'blues note'. He spoke of the many times he would take musical strains heard in church services and write these phrases down and eventually put them into a composition.

In speaking of Negro songs and the reactions of the people in general, Handy stated that there is something in certain chords and strains that 'hit into the minds' of Negroes and when heard engender a state of excitement.

Handy was very proud of the traditional music of the Negro and complained that many Negro music educators are gradually de-emphasizing the Negro folk music that Scott Joplin and others made popular and avoid the teaching of the spirituals.

Although he then was eighty-four years old and blind, Handy stated he still got a thrill out of hearing his compositions performed, and related one incident in 1954 when singing the "Saint Louis Blues" over a national broadcast on radio, Lawrence Tibbett called this composition the most original American tune.

Handy also spoke of the fact that he was swindled out of the copyright of "Memphis Blues", and received only \$50.00 for the first twenty-eight years of its existence. It was not until 1937 that the copyright to this, considered to be by many as the first blues song to be transcribed to music, was legally restored to its rightful owner.<sup>21</sup>



He continued that the "Saint Louis Blues" was written one night in Memphis, Tennessee, his home at that time, and from profits of this song and others he opened his own publishing house in Memphis and later one in New York, becoming the first Negro to go into business in the section of Manhattan, New York called 'Tin Pan Alley', where most of the music publishers have their offices.

Besides his many blues tunes, Handy has also written many religious tunes, including volumes of spirituals.

The visit with Handy dispelled from my mind the suspicion that he might be an illiterate man and lacking in intelligence, for during the interview, he displayed intelligence, some musical knowledge and much foresight, also a deep interest in his race and the continued development of Negro music.

There have been many efforts by citizens of Saint Louis to honor W.C. Handy for the popularity his composition brought to the city of Saint Louis, but unfortunately he died before any one of these projects became a reality. I was one of a committee which met in the office of the late Mayor Darst when plans were being discussed to have a shrine built on the Saint Louis waterfront, where many ideas for the writing of the "Saint Louis Blues" were born, honoring W.C. Handy. Handy was honored



guest at this meeting. This was another project which never materialized.

The following article appeared in the July 12, 1951 issue of the Globe Democrat:

"One of these days the city fathers ought to get together and hand over a special title to W.C. Handy, something like this: 'Saint Louis' Unofficial One Man Chamber of Commerce'. If anybody deserves it, Handy does. That one song of his 'Saint Louis Blues' probably the best known single piece of music in the world, is played, chanted, danced and whistled in every nook and cranny of the globe."<sup>22</sup>

Until blindness and illness came to him, Handy often appeared in various sections of the country on radio, television and public places making personal appearances where he often played his compositions on the trumpet, his major instrument. He has been honored by many individuals and organizations as being a great asset to the music of the Negro, of America and of the world. He was very anxious to return to Saint Louis to renew acquaintances. Because of personal contact with Handy after interview and correspondence, I was delegated to write him and invite him to Saint Louis to be guest of honor for a proposed Saint Louis Jazz Festival which was to be held in November, 1957 during the week of his birthday.<sup>23</sup>

An article released by the United Press in 1955 depicting the life of W.C. Handy and many of his days in



Saint Louis, appeared in the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch. (For details of this article entitled 'Low Birth of the "Saint Louis Blues" ', see Appendix XVII.)

On Wednesday, June the 1st, 1955 when W. C. Handy was honored by Edward R. Morrow, nationally known news editor and broadcaster, on his television program, the fifteen minute telecast was produced from Handy's Yonkers, New York home for the nationwide hook up. Greetings were sent to Handy from personalities all over the world. Among these were ones from President Eisenhower and former President Harry S. Truman. The citation presented to Handy by the New York State Commission for the Blind includes these words:

"WILLIAM CHRISTOPHER HANDY

Musician, composer and humanitarian.  
Your musical compositions have given  
joy and pleasure to countless persons.  
With its great personality 'Saint Louis  
Blues' has become a part of American  
life and has influenced the music of  
the world."

Unfortunately Handy did not live to experience what probably would have been one of the highlights of his life his coming back to Saint Louis on April 10, 1958 for the premier of the motion picture depicting his life, "The Saint Louis Blues", for he died a few days before this premier was held at the Fox Theatre in Saint Louis. He was to have been the guest of the city on that day.

His widow, his brother, Nathaniel 'Nat' King Cole,



who portrayed Handy in the picture, and Pearl Bailey, one of the stars of the production, attended this premier and were guests of Saint Louis during their stay. Mayor Raymond Tucker proclaimed April 10, 1958 as W. C. Handy Day.

The picture itself, did little to really portray the true life of W. C. Handy, and what he stood for, for it was another commercial attempt of the Hollywood producers to present a best seller to the general public. The attempt was not successful, for after months of build up, the picture was not a great box office attraction. There are still plans to honor W. C. Handy in Saint Louis.

#### Guy Williams

One of the musicians still active in music circles in Saint Louis who formerly worked in bands with W. C. Handy, is Guy Williams, considered the oldest active member of the Saint Louis Federation of Musicians, Local No. 197, A.F. of M.

During my interview with Williams, music in the older days was discussed.

Guy Williams joined W. C. Handy's musical group in Memphis around 1907 when Williams came to Memphis from Greenville, Mississippi. "Memphis Blues" was composed and had its first performance while Williams was a member of Handy's group. In fact, according to Williams, he sang the



composition before it was published.

Williams spoke of the musical ability of Handy, stating that even then he was competent as a musician and a good leader. He continued that often Handy would arrange parts for his group from a piano score as they traveled from one engagement to another.

Williams spoke of the immediate favorable reaction to the "Memphis Blues" after the first performance, and of the appearance of a tenor saxophone break in the composition, being the first known musical break to have been a part of a composition.<sup>24</sup>

Williams spoke proudly of the fact that he was one of the first to sing the "Saint Louis Blues" and that he attained quite a bit of popularity for his interpretation of that song.

Williams moved to Saint Louis in 1918 and continued his musical activities playing in various road houses and clubs in the area.

Through the years, Guy Williams has continued to lead a group of musicians who have performed at most of the leading country clubs and for some of the most prominent people in the Saint Louis area. His group has been recognized for their versatility. In its repertory are included songs that are sang in German, Italian and Irish dialect. They also feature many of the numbers that were favorites during the "Gay Nineties".



## Riverboat Jazz

### Fate Marable

By means of the riverboats, much of the New Orleans jazz was transported to other sections of the United States:

"Jazz first moved outward from New Orleans at the very end of the last century, when the surviving riverboats - the great packet days over - were converted into excursion steamers, the famous show boats. In the early days of the Twentieth Century the Capitol, the Sidney, the Saint Paul, and others made their passenger-carrying voyages up the Mississippi River to Memphis, Saint Louis, Cairo, Davenport, and even Saint Paul; they played, as well, the major tributaries of the great Mississippi system, following the Ohio eastward to Pittsburg, and the Missouri northwest to Kansas City and Omaha. These boats furnished entertainment for the passengers and docking at piers or alongside the levees - or taking them aboard for short excursions - for the local populace. In the entertainment which varied from the large orchestra down to the original and typical steam calliope, there was much jazz".<sup>25</sup>

When riverboat jazz is discussed, most likely one of the first names to be mentioned will be the late Fate Marable, who played on the riverboats from 1907 until 1940. Marable worked in and out of Saint Louis from 1918 until his death in 1947. During that time, many of the prominent musicians in the field of jazz performed in one of the groups organized by Marable.

Fate Marable began his riverboat career in 1907 as a ragtime pianist on the Steamer J.S. which was owned by the



Acme Packing Company and ran from Rock Island, to New Orleans. When Marable began working on this steamer, he performed with a white violinist. The group eventually became a four piece band with a trumpet player and drummer added to the original trio. Marable was the only Negro in the group. This unit played together until 1910 when a fire destroyed the boat. By this time, Marable had become one of the leading ragtime piano players on the riverboats.

Captain John Streckfus, one of the Streckfus family which owned most of the riverboats operating on the Mississippi River during the days of the riverboats, bought the Diamond Jo Packet Company, with boats including the Saint Paul, the Quincy, which later became the second J.S. and the Sidney. The latter was immediately converted into an excursion boat and Fate Marable was employed as orchestra leader, thus becoming the first Negro known to lead an orchestra on one of the riverboats.

Marable, originally from Paducah, Kentucky, was greatly influenced by the style of jazz he had been hearing in New Orleans. As he explained:

"Jazz was the outgrowth of Negro life in New Orleans. It developed from the chants of roustabouts loading cotton boats, singing in perfect rhythm as they lifted the bales. It grew out of the music played by the bands which accompanied funeral processions. On the way to a burial the music was solemn, with a sound marching tempo. But on the way back from the burial, the musicians pepped up the marches to cheer the mourners. No matter



how they deviated from the melody in improvisation they still had the basic foundation of timing."<sup>26</sup>

This interest in the New Orleans style of music and his desire to organize a band to play that type of jazz prompted Marable to organize an all Negro unit in 1917. Most of these musicians were from Paducah, Kentucky.

Marable left this band in 1918 at the request of the Streckfus Company which had become quite interested in him. He was sent to Saint Louis to appear as featured pianist on the Steamer Saint Paul, which had also been converted into an excursion boat. Marable played alone in the upper deck cafeteria and on the main band stand while the white orchestra, composed of Saint Louis musicians, took intermissions. This band was under the leadership of Gene Rodemich. Marable introduced the New Orleans style of riverboat jazz to Saint Louis. Soon afterwards, he organized a band of New Orleans musicians and replaced Rodemich as orchestra leader on the Steamer Saint Paul. This began riverboat jazz in Saint Louis. Many of the New Orleans musicians brought to Saint Louis by Marable remained here. Others gradually branched out from here and became prominent in the field of jazz.

Among the musicians in the first band Marable brought to Saint Louis was Louis Armstrong, who was then seventeen years old. Other musicians included such jazz favorites as Johnny St. Cyr, considered by many as the



foremost exponent of jazz on the banjo, Baby Dodds, drummer, and Pop Foster, bass. The mixture of this New Orleans jazz, and the blues style which characterized Saint Louis jazz after the ragtime era, began a new type of jazz in Saint Louis.

Soon Marable developed a new style of jazz which popularized his band. They presented a more subtle style of jazz with a smooth mixture of blues and ragtime designed more for dancing. As Marable explained it:

"It was an entirely different kind of music than the ragtime which proceeded it or the swing which followed it."<sup>27</sup>

As Norman Mason spoke of this music:

"The band played what was called smooth swing music, and set a new trend of playing."<sup>28</sup>

This group broke away from the loudness and free improvisation which had typified dixieland and ragtime. More organization was featured. As stated in the book 'Shining Trumpets':

"These men were not completely restrained by a music as severely arranged and as sweet as that of Fate's band, the real forerunner of sweet swing. St. Cyr says they were allowed some improvising at all times and were given two numbers, out of the twelve played each three hours, to play in the freest jazz manner. Marable even had two trumpeters; one played sweet, or at least legitimately, and one played hot."<sup>29</sup>

As a result of this innovation and the personnel of



the band, during the years 1920 and 1921, Fate Marable's band was considered to be one of the best in the United States.<sup>30</sup>

Louis Armstrong left the Marable orchestra in 1921 and after a return to New Orleans, he settled in Chicago where he joined a group under the leadership of another New Orleans jazz pioneer, King Oliver. From this band Louis Armstrong developed into one of the immortals of jazz. Johnny St. Cyr, banjo, and Baby Dodds also left Marable in 1921 to join King Oliver.

Among the many other musicians who joined Marable, performed in Saint Louis, and later attained some national prominence are:

Boyd Atkins, violinist who wrote "Heebie-Jeebies" and left Marable in 1923 to lead his own group in Chicago.

Irvin Randolph, trumpet, who left Marable late in the 1920's and joined Cab Calloway.

Earl Carruthers, sax, who left in the late 1920's to join Jimmy Lunceford.

Henry 'Red' Allen, who left in 1929 to join the Mills Blue Rhythm Band and later formed his own group.

Tab Smith, who left Marable in 1933 to join the Count Basie Orchestra, and later organized his own group in New York and is now back in Saint Louis.

Floyd Campbell, drummer now active in Chicago.

Eugene Cedric, sax, who joined the late Fats Waller.



Al Morgan, bass, who left to join Cab Calloway.

Zutty Singleton, who left in the early 1920's to join Pee Wee Russell.

Earl Bostic, who has become one of the leading sax stylists.

Jimmy Blanton, bass stylist who was featured with Duke Ellington.

During his years on the riverboats, Fate Marable employed many of the leading musicians of Saint Louis, in fact during his last years as riverboat leader, his band included mostly Saint Louis musicians. Among the many Saint Louisans who have played with Marable are included:

Dewey Jackson	Charles Creath
Joseph Nevils	Leonard Davis
William Rollins	Walter Stanley
Harry Dial	Leon 'Foots' Goodson
Nathaniel Story	Thomas Starks

In 1940 Marable retired from traveling on riverboats and settled in Saint Louis. From that time until his death in 1947 he was solo pianist at the Victorian Club located at 3719 Washington Boulevard, where he continued to display his talents.

In speaking of jazz Marable said:

"I have played ragtime, jazz-time, swing and I believe that the Dixie-land style of jazz gives a man the best chance to play what is in him. A real jazz musician doesn't require the other man's thought through arrangements. He plays as a solid musician of his own making.



I firmly believe that New Orleans and Louis Armstrong have done more for the present dance band than any other factors."<sup>31</sup>

### Norman Mason

Norman Mason came to Saint Louis in 1920 with Fate Marable on one of the riverboats, and was a member of the band when it was considered one of the greatest musical organizations of its kind in America. Mason, who now lives in Saint Louis and plays saxophone and clarinet, was trumpet player with Fate Marable along with Louis Armstrong. He was the legitimate trumpet player and Armstrong was the featured soloist. Mason is credited with teaching Louis Armstrong how to read music.<sup>32</sup>

During an interview with Mason he spoke of the Marable band of 1920 and 1921 and of the smooth swing music the band featured. As a result of the popularity the band attained, Marable had offers to take the band to Europe for engagements, and also to play in New York, but he preferred to remain on the riverboats.

Mason, a native of Nassau, began playing music in the churches of his native land. He came to the United States in 1915. He related that he studied trumpet to be a concert soloist, not too interested in becoming a jazz musician, but eventually started playing dixieland, realizing that during that time, as is the case today, it was difficult for a Negro to make a livelihood in music as



an instrumentalist unless he was in the jazz field.

According to Mason, saxophones were not used in jazz bands before 1922, the only reed instruments being the clarinet. He stated he began playing saxophone by coincidence, for while a member of the Fate Marable band, a gentleman heard the band on the boat and became interested in taking Louis Armstrong, Mason and other members of the band to Seattle, Washington to work in a club there. He wanted someone to double on the saxophone. Mason bought a C melody saxophone, which was very popular during that time, and began practicing. He soon learned enough on the instrument to double. He chose the C melody sax, because he knew he could read the cello parts very well with that instrument.

The Eddie Allen band, which Mason joined on the Steamer Saint Paul around 1922 in Saint Louis, was the first known jazz band to have a saxophone section.<sup>33</sup> In this section was Mason, Eugene Cedric, and Walter Thomas. Special parts were written for this part of the band. This new innovation to the jazz field, brought much popularity to the group. The group was brought to New Orleans and the saxophone section appeared in schools and other public places on exhibition. The Buescher Instrument Company heard about this reed section, and gave them Buescher saxophones, which they introduced in Saint Louis. Mason,



who acquired two C melody saxophones, a baritone sax, and an alto sax, soon stopped playing the trumpet because more jobs called for saxophone which now, along with the clarinet, is his major instrument.

After ceasing his activities as a riverboat musician, Mason traveled extensively and finally settled in Saint Louis where he has been performing with the leading groups in this area for many years.

At the present time, Mason is still very active in the jazz'field in Saint Louis. When dixieland was revived in Saint Louis around 1949, Mason was among the musicians who enjoyed the rejuvenation of that kind of music, and is presently considered as one of the leading dixieland clarinetists in the city. He was a member of the Singleton Palmer Dixieland Six for around five years while that group was achieving acclaim as one of the better dixieland units in the midwest. He is often selected to appear with groups for jazz concerts and history of jazz demonstrations.

#### Dewey Jackson - 1900

Another of the pioneers of the jazz movement in Saint Louis who was very prominent as a riverboat musician is Dewey Jackson. Jackson, born in Saint Louis in 1900, was educated in the Saint Louis public school system. He started playing trumpet at the age of thirteen as a member of the Odd Fellows Band. P. B. Langford was his first



teacher. Jackson was a member of this band for three years, and soon afterwards began his career as a professional jazz musician.

One of his first jobs was with an orchestra under the leadership of Charlie Creath, another of the Negro jazz pioneers of Saint Louis, in 1920 on the riverboat Steamer J.S.

Jackson organized his first band in 1922, and the group was called Dewey Jackson's Gold Melody Band. The personnel of this band was:

Jane Hemingway on piano  
Boyd Atkins on violin and sax  
Sammy Long on tenor sax  
Harry Dial on drums  
Andrew Luper on trombone  
Jackson on trumpet.

Jackson received an offer from Fate Marable and joined Marable's band in September of 1925 in New Orleans. In October of 1925, Jackson became leader of the band, as Marable was sent on another riverboat. Jackson toured up the river with this band. Among the personnel of this group were:

George 'Pops' Foster on bass viol  
Cecil White on tuba  
Sammy Long on alto sax  
Pete Robinson on banjo  
Lovinghood on piano  
Floyd Campbell on drums.

During the years 1925 and 1926, Jackson continued as a riverboat musician with Fate Marable's band and with groups under his own leadership, as Fate divided his time



as band leader on the riverboats and as pianist and leader of New Orleans groups. When Fate would leave the band, Jackson would take over as leader.<sup>35</sup>

Later in 1926, Jackson joined the original Cab Calloway band, 'The Missouriians' and played with this group in New York at the Cotton Club, which at that time was one of the leading night clubs in the country. In February of 1927, Jackson left the Calloway band and returned to Saint Louis. In March of that year, he returned to New Orleans to rejoin Fate Marable's band. Charlie Creath was in this band which featured the two as trumpet soloists.

In 1926, Jackson returned to Saint Louis and formed another group which he called Dewey Jackson and his Musical Ambassadors. This orchestra played many dances in and around Saint Louis for Jesse Johnson, one of the top Negro dance promoters in this area at that time. Until his death, Johnson brought most of the leading Negro music personalities and dance orchestras in Saint Louis.

For the next few years, Jackson played the winter seasons in Saint Louis at various establishments, and in May he would return to New Orleans for the excursion beat season. He would be either a member of Fate Marable's band, or the leader of a group. During this period, many prominent musicians played with Jackson.

willing to help aspiring musicians with his musical knowledge



Included were:

Wilbur Kirk who left to join Noble Sissle  
Donald Stoval, who left to join Henry  
 'Red' Allen  
Earl Caruthers, who later joined the Jimmy  
 Lunceford Orchestra.

Jackson continued such musical activities until 1937 when he more or less settled again in Saint Louis. During this year, I joined the Dewey Jackson orchestra and remained as pianist until 1940, when I left to attend Wilberforce University. The three years I spent working with Jackson were among the highlights of my musical career. With this group I appeared in many of the prominent night spots in this area. One of the most interesting experiences was the two and one-half month engagement with the Jackson Orchestra on a riverboat, Steamer Washington. We traveled on the Ohio River from Paducah, Kentucky to Washington, Pennsylvania. Besides playing piano with the band, I also played the calliope, a steam organ which is on the top deck on most of the excursion steamers. This instrument was played as the boat was nearing the town from which the excursion would leave.

Playing with such a jazz pioneer as Dewey Jackson was a practical music education. He was an example of the type of musicians who have typified this movement, willing to help aspiring musicians with his musical knowledge



and encouragement.

The last engagement on the riverboats for Jackson was the season of 1941, when he was leader on the Steamer Senator. Since then he has ceased his traveling, and limited his playing to places in the Saint Louis area. Despite his many years of performing, Jackson is still considered one of the leading jazz trumpet players in this area. His strong embouchure is one of his greatest assets, and his high and low notes are still true and under his full control. The public continues to be amazed at the ability of Jackson to continue playing with such power and assurance. When dixieland music was revived in Saint Louis, he was again one of the top performers as band leader and featured trumpet player at concerts and such. He, along with Norman Mason, was also a featured member of the Singleton Palmer Dixieland Six when the group was organized in 1949.

Many of the musicians in the jazz field in Saint Louis have been members of groups headed by Dewey Jackson and have benefited from his teachings and advise.

The desire to remain in Saint Louis has kept Jackson from attaining the national prominence many feel he should have. Edith Johnson, wife of the late Jesse Johnson, who has been mentioned as one of the leading Negro jazz promoters, was formerly a blues singer. She was one of the few that recorded. One of her recordings was of a



### Saint Louis and the Blues

To many jazz enthusiasts, the blues are the real backbone of jazz. The blues changes, which were discussed in Chapter I (pages **87-90** ), are used in every form of improvised jazz. Basic chord changes for many dixie-land, swing and even modern jazz tunes are deviations of what are commonly known as the blues changes.

The early forms of jazz began in New Orleans, but the blues became popular farther up the Mississippi River. Memphis and Saint Louis were considered the first blues centers. Many of the musicians and singers in their migration north from New Orleans, stopped off in Memphis or Saint Louis.

There were many early blues singers in Saint Louis, many who never obtained national prominence. Some recorded but most of them didn't. Various spots kept them so active here, they never ventured away from the area. Before they achieved national acclaim, many fell victims of the life they lived, dissipation being a common factor, and died at an early age.

Among early female blues singers in Saint Louis were Victoria Spivey, Alice Moore, Hazel Myers and Trixie Smith. Edith Johnson, wife of the late Jesse Johnson who has been mentioned as one of the leading Negro dance promoters, was formerly a blues singer. She was one of the few that recorded. One of her recordings was of a



tune she learned from her brother, "The Ducks Yas Yas".<sup>36</sup> She recorded on the Okey and Paramount Label.<sup>37</sup> Many of her recordings were made under the name of Hattie North. Count Basie was her accompanist on one of her recording dates.

Another singer, Mary Smith also recorded on the Okey Label. She reportedly developed her blues styling from association with Lonnie Johnson, another of the New Orleans jazz personalities. She changed her name to Mary Johnson when she began recording. Her first date followed her winning a Blues Talent Contest held at the Booker Washington Theatre in 1929. She also recorded for Brunswick, Paramount and Decca Recording Companies.

Among the male blues singers in the Saint Louis area is Joe Williams, who has the distinction of being one of the few nine string guitar players in the entertainment field.<sup>38</sup> Williams is still active in blues recording. In 1947, he recorded for Columbia, and more recently he has recorded for Dee-Jay and Chess Record Companies of Chicago. Other blues singers include Walter Davis, Stump Johnson, J.D. Short, and Rufus Perryman, known as 'Albino Red', and also as 'Speckled Red'. Among his Brunswick records are "Dirty Dozens", and "Wilkins Street Stomp". He has recently recorded for Bluenote and Delmar Record Companies of Saint Louis.

During the time most of these blues singers were



enjoying popularity the type of blues they were singing, and perhaps most blues, were not considered to be respectable, and in the annals of music, their contribution was considered very crude indeed, although they were popular in their own circles, and many devotees of the folk type of blues frequented the places they performed.

Strangely enough, the blues are enjoying a revival of prominence now, and much of the music performed and recorded by so called blues artists, is of the same type musically. Instead of the words being suggestive and risque, appealing to the older public, the appeal is to the teenagers. The terms rhythm, and blues, and rock and roll have become favorites among the younger set. Many of the older blues singers have lost their prominence to younger performers who substitute showmanship and various types of gyrations for the lack of musicianship, thus the blues have lost most of the qualities of the older folk type, and have become commercial music vehicles, with neither the music or the words of much material value.

Among the Saint Louis rock and roll musicians who are very popular now are Ike Turner, whose recording of "Tore Up" became a favorite, Billy Gayles, who was vocalist on Turner's recording of "Tore Up", Little Milton Campbell, and Chuck Berry, who is enjoying national acclaim as a rock and roll performer. Such recordings of



his as "Maybelline", "School Days", "Rocking and Reeling", and "Sweet Little Sixteen" have become juke box favorites, and as a result of these hits Berry is in demand from coast to coast for personal appearances, and has appeared in leading radio and television shows including American Band Stand. He has also appeared in movies which featured rock and roll performers.

In the Saint Louis area at the present time, the various rock and roll bands are very much in demand, and work more consistently than other musicians.

#### The Saint Louis Crackerjacks

Among the many Saint Louis Negro jazz groups very popular in the late 1920's and 1930's was the Saint Louis Crackerjacks. This organization was very active between the years 1929 and 1938 and featured many of the outstanding jazz musicians, some who have attained national recognition. During the existence of the Crackerjacks, there were three prominent leaders, Eddie Johnson, Winfield Baker, and Joseph 'Chick' Finney.

Eddie Johnson organized the first band to call themselves the Crackerjacks. He formed this group in 1929 taking over the leadership after Oliver Cobb, former leader, had drowned. The personnel of this band was:

Ernest 'Chick' Franklin, on tenor sax



Walter and Fred Martin, on alto saxes

Winfield Baker, on trombone

Bennie Jackson, banjoist and vocalist

Sid Todd on bass

Lester Nichols drummer

Eddie Johnson on piano

The first additions in this group were James Telphy, and Singleton Palmer on trumpets. Palmer later changed instruments and became one of Saint Louis' leading bass viol and tuba players in the jazz field. The style and performances of this band brought them much popularity in the Saint Louis area, and with the booking of Jesse Johnson, they made successful tours to various sections of the country.

In 1933, Tab Smith joined the group, after coming to Saint Louis with Fate Marable's band, as Eddie Johnson replaced many of the local musicians with some of the out of town instrumentalists who had settled in Saint Louis.

Winfield Baker kept the local musicians together and with additions retained the Crackerjacks as local favorites. For a short period, there were two groups in the area carrying the name of the Crackerjacks, Eddie Johnson's Crackerjacks and the Saint Louis Crackerjacks. The personnel of the Saint Louis Crackerjacks was:

Irvin Woods, Joe Anderson and Harold Baker  
on trumpets



Winfield Baker on trombone

Earl Euinberg on piano

William 'Bede' Baskerville, on guitar and the arranger

Paul Commers, on drums and vocalist

Sid Todd on bass.

Under the leadership of Baker, other changes in personnel were made. Chick Finney became pianist with the group, and Austin Wright joined the band as vocalist. Billy Jones, now a prominent attorney in East Saint Louis, replaced Commers on drums, and he was replaced by Nick Haywood. Kermit Haynes played bass horn.

In 1935, after the Saint Louis Crackerjacks had returned to Saint Louis after a successful performance in Chicago, the group went through another personnel change.

In the newly organized group, Austin Wright became director, as well as vocalist, Chick Finney became business manager as well as booking agent. 'Bede' Baskerville remained as guitarist and chief arranger. Among other additions were George L. Smith, present president of Musicians Union Local No. 197, on trumpet along with Elmer Ming and Levi Madison. Robert 'Buster' Scott replaced former leader Winfield Baker on trombone.

This group retained the name of the Saint Louis Crackerjacks, and for three years was one of the leading dance bands in the area. The band was distinguished by



the arrangements of Baskerville, who often copied from record arrangements of popular hits recorded by such prominent groups as those headed by Jimmy Lunceford, Count Basie, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Glen Gray and Andy Kirk. With these arrangements and the original stylings of the Crackerjacks the band remained very popular.<sup>34</sup> In 1936, they received offers from several of the leading recording companies who were bidding for the services of the Crackerjacks.

Among the original tunes recorded on Decca Records were "Blue Thinking of You", vocal by Austin Wright, "Fussing All the Time", vocal by Edric Campbell, and the "Cracker-jack Stomp".

Among the members of the various groups called the Crackerjacks who attained national recognition as jazz musicians are Harold Baker, currently a member of the Duke Ellington Orchestra, Robert 'Buster' Scott, formerly featured with Lionel Hampton and Count Basie, and Tab Smith, who after being featured with Count Basie, formed his own unit in New York. His recording of "Because of You", a few years ago, became a national hit, and resulted in many cross country tours for him and his band.

The Saint Louis Crackerjacks were often featured in 'battles of music' which were very popular during the 1930's. (This featured two or more orchestras, during one



night's engagement, playing for the same dance.) According to Finney:

"Considering the many articles that have been written about the Saint Louis Crackerjacks, we believe their mention in the Esquire Magazine in 1947, by the late Jimmy Lunceford, was the best when he said: 'During the early thirties, this young Saint Louis jazz group was one of the best in the business in a battle of music. There wasn't anything left for anyone else to play when they got through'".<sup>40</sup>

The Saint Louis Crackerjacks broke up in 1938. Lack of employment and union problems were the chief factors for this dissolution. By this time, many of the more prominent members of this group had left and were either performing in town with other bands or had left Saint Louis.

#### The Jeter-Pillars Orchestra

One of the most popular of the Saint Louis jazz orchestras for many years was the one under the co-leadership of James Jeter, and Hayes Pillars. These musicians brought their group to Saint Louis in 1934 to play an engagement at Club Plantation. During their stay, many of America's most prominent jazz musicians performed in the group.

Jeter and Pillars, both natives of North Little Rock, Arkansas, began working together in a band under the leadership of Alphonso Trent, another native of



Arkansas, who reportedly had one of the better dance bands around 1927. This group stayed together until 1933 touring such states as Texas, through Ohio, New York and the New England states annually. Charles, brother of Hayes Pillars, joined the group in 1932. When the Trent band disbanded in 1933 because of conditions as a result of the depression, Jeter, Hayes and Charles Pillars went to Cleveland to work with Chester Clark and his group. The Jeter-Pillars Orchestra was organized in Cleveland on January 6, 1933, and played there until May of 1934.<sup>41</sup> On July the 4th, 1934, the group began a six week engagement at Club Plantation in Saint Louis which extended to a ten year stay. The personnel of the orchestra which began the engagement at the Club Plantation included:

Harry Edison, trumpet  
Snub Mosley, valve trombone  
Walter Page, bass viol  
Jimmy Miller, guitar  
Godman, piano  
Charles and Hayes Pillars, saxes - Also Jeter  
A. G. Godley, drums.<sup>42</sup>

During this extended engagement at the Club Plantation the personnel of the band changed from time to time. Such other prominent jazz personalities as Dan Minor, Joe Jones, Floyd Smith, Gus Wilson, brother of Teddy Wilson, Ray Perry, George Hudson, who became another of Saint Louis' leading orchestra leaders, and Jimmy Blanton, performed with the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra.<sup>43</sup>



respect. Club Plantation was primarily a night club which featured dancing and entertainment. The Jeter-Pillars Orchestra became characterized for its versatility.

According to Pillars:

"The band never tired the audience with any particular kind of music. We featured a variety of music. I called it understandable jazz."<sup>44</sup>

This long engagement at the Club Plantation at that time was considered one of the best jobs in America for a band of that size, and as a result Pillars was always able to hire the top musicians in the country.

Most of the outstanding Negro acts in show business were featured in the floor shows at Club Plantation.

Among these were:

The Mills Brothers  
The Step Brothers  
Ink Spots  
Deep River Boys  
Cook and Brown  
Nicholas Brothers  
Pops and Louie

When Count Basie organized his first band which achieved national recognition, Walter Page, Dan Minor, Harry Edison and Joe Jones left the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra, to join Basie in 1936. Among other members of the group who won national prominence were Sidney Catlett, A. G. Godley and Floyd Smith. Madeleine Green and Betty Roche, who performed with the orchestra as featured vocalists, were later featured with Earl Hines and Duke Ellington,



respectively. Ray Perry, who also worked with the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra, was one of the few jazz soloists on the electric violin.

Besides playing tenor saxophone with the group, Hayes Pillars was musical director. James Jeter played alto and baritone saxophone and was business manager. As Club Plantation featured three floor shows nightly, with chorus girls along with the featured acts, Pillars developed into a very capable show director, which added to the success of the band on that job. Such prominent show producers as S. H. Dudley, Jr., Larry Steele, Joe 'Ziggy' Johnson, and Leonard Reed presented show productions at the Plantation.

Unfortunately, Club Plantation catered only to white patronage, and the only time Negroes were given a chance to hear the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra was at the infrequent Negro dances.

In 1944 when Club Riviera was opened for Negroes, (which automatically means, in Saint Louis, that everyone is welcome for whites are seldom refused admission to Negro establishments), the general public in Saint Louis had an opportunity to hear the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra. This group was hired as the house band. Club Riviera, opened by Jordan Chambers, prominent Negro undertaker and politician, instituted the same entertainment policy as

and Estrellita, a vocal trio, the Cabin Girls, formerly the



Club Plantation, with chorus girls and nationally known featured attractions.

I joined the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra in November of 1944 while the band was appearing at the Club Riviera. We remained there until January of 1945, when an engagement at Club Rhumboogie in Chicago, Illinois was accepted. This engagement lasted for a period of ten weeks, and terminated when a theatre tour with Louis Jordan as featured attraction was begun. On Good Friday in 1945, the show with Louis Jordan as attraction, and with the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra, opened a week's engagement at the Apollo Theatre in New York City.<sup>45</sup> This was the first appearance of the Jeter-Pillars group in New York, and many of the musicians and entertainers who had worked with the group at Club Plantation came to the theatre to renew acquaintances.

Following the New York engagement, similar theatre dates followed in Washington D.C., Detroit and Chicago.

The band returned to Saint Louis in May of 1945, and returned to Club Plantation for the summer of that year.

In September of 1945, the orchestra left Saint Louis again for New York to begin a U.S.O. tour of military bases in the New England states. A show was formed which featured besides the band, a comedy act, Apus and Estrelita, a vocal trio, the Cabin Girls, formerly the



Cabin Kids who had appeared in the movies some years before in pictures with Big Crosby, a dancing duo, Verne and Hutchie, and a girl vocalist, Helen Wood. From favorable reports of the show, which was called 'Red-Hot and Blues', the entire personnel was sent overseas on a U.S. O circuit show. We played for three months in the Phillipine Islands, and three months in Japan. The personnel of Jeter-Pillars Orchestra for this trip was:

'Razz' Mitchell, on drums (formerly with Louis Jordan)

Carl Pruitt, on bass (formerly with Cootie William, Lucky Millender and Earl Hines)

John Cotter, on piano

Hayes Pillars, Charles Pillars, James Jeter, James Taylor, Louis Transue on saxophones

Edward Levy, joined the group overseas

Walter 'Crack' Stanley, Sam Massenburg, Wimpy Mosby on trumpets

Warren Scott, Nat Story and Edward Weston on trombones

This U.S. O tour overseas began in December of 1945 and extended until June of 1946. During this time, our show was the largest U.S.O. Show in the South Pacific. The revue received many favorable write-ups in the publications for the Americans in that section of the world. The following was written after a performance in Morioka, Japan:

"USO SHOW SCORES A SMASH HIT WITH 311TH  
A responsive G.I. audience filled the



theatre Wednesday night to see the USO Show 'Red Hot and Blue'.

The all Negro cast of twenty-three men and women launched their performance with a smooth rendition of 'Saint Louis Blues' played by the fourteen piece orchestra. Following the next number, 'Bugle Call Rag', were two numbers featuring the foot-loose syncopation of the dancing team, Verne and Hutchie, and 'Who Threw the Whiskey in the Well', a la Lucky Millender, with the entire audience joining in on the chorus, and a knocked out take-off on Louis Jordan's 'Caledonia' with Hayes Pillars on the vocal. There was an original medley of old nursery rhymes with Pillars again taking the vocals while a sextet consisting of Louis Transue, tenor sax; Wimpy Mosby, trumpet; Charles Pillars, alto sax; 'Razz' Mitchell, drums; Carl Pruitt, bass; and John Cotter, piano. Cotter also does all the orchestration on the band's numbers.

Other high points of the evening included the rich harmonies of the 'Three Cabin Girls', originally with Bing Crosby and famous as the 'Cabin Kids' and the hilarious antics of 'Apus and Estrellita', with their routine of domestic discord set to music. Apus and Estrellita have been together for twelve years, working in well known shows and night spots on Broadway.

Before closing with their theme song 'Lazy Rhythm' the orchestra played a rafter rocking arrangement of 'One O'Clock Jump'.

The band has been together for several years, and played for servicemen throughout the New England states before leaving the U.S. in December. After a one night stay in Sendai, the show goes to the Ernie Pyle Theatre in Tokyo for an indefinite run."<sup>46</sup>

The show returned to the United States in June of 1946. The orchestra returned to Saint Louis and reorganized, as many of the musicians from out of town did



not return to Saint Louis. An engagement at Club Riviera soon followed the return of the band to Saint Louis. In November of that year, the band returned to New York for another appearance at the Apollo Theatre.

After another engagement at the Apollo Theatre in June of 1947, the days of the prominence of the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra were nearing an end. With city and state laws forbidding such clubs as the Plantation and the Riviera unlimited time operation, and the forced closing of many dance halls in the city that had regularly hired bands, and strict regulations being enforced on night clubs and dance halls, the lack of employment resulted in the group disbanding in the Summer of 1947.

Since then the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra has played for dances, and other engagements in the city, not as the well organized musical group it had been through the years, but with a selected group of musicians most of whom played in the orchestra before.

Because of his known ability as a director and orchestra leader, Hayes Pillars was selected to conduct and organize the orchestra for performances of the Y Circus held in 1952, 1953 and 1954. This orchestra consisting of twenty musicians, went under the name of the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra. I wrote the musical arrangements for a portion of the show.



Presently James Jeter and Hayes Pillars are still working together. Both are employed by the Anheuser-Busch Brewery Company, promoting Budweiser and Busch Bavarian Beer. Pillars still accepts musical jobs occasionally. Jeter is in semi-retirement from music.

Many of the Saint Louis musicians, including this writer, are indebted to Hayes Pillars, for the musical knowledge he conveyed to us, and also the encouragement and inspiration he has been since a resident of Saint Louis.

#### Elijah W. Shaw

Another of the Saint Louis Negro jazz pioneers is Elijah W. Shaw. The following information which appeared in the 1950 edition of 'Who's Who in Colored America', gives a brief account of Elijah Shaw up to that date:

##### "Elijah William Shaw

Musician - Union Executive

Born: Jackson, Tennessee on September 9, 1900

Education: Public Schools of Jackson and Memphis, Tennessee

Began drumming at the age of 10 years under the instructions of Granville Robinson.

Played with early popular musicians such as Buster Bailey and Johnny Dunn.

From 1915 until 1917 trouped with early minstrel shows.

Former member of Wilson Robinson's Bostonian Orchestra, which later became Cab Calloway's Orchestra.



Played on riverboats in Saint Louis

Former member of the Saint Louis Negro Symphony

Played at Criterion Theatre for five years

Musicians Union leader for more than twenty-five years

Helped regain charter for Saint Louis Negro musicians."<sup>47</sup>

Shaw first came to Saint Louis in 1917, and has been working in and out of Saint Louis since then, with this being his home. He played at Booker Washington Theatre in a combo composed of Burroughs Lovingood on piano, Charles Hearvey on trumpet. He stated that at this theatre they played for such prominent performers as Mamie Smith, Bessie Smith, Ethel Waters, Peg Leg Bates, the Whitman Sisters, the Drake and Walker Company, Brown Skin Models, Butterbeans and Susie, Ma Rainey and Bill Robinson.<sup>48</sup>

During the days of the silent movies, Shaw played drums at the Criterion Theatre in Saint Louis from 1923 until 1928. Working in the band with him were Lewis Crenshaw on piano, Z.T. Randolph on trumpet and Artie Mosby on violin.

When the Club Plantation opened in 1932, the orchestra was under the leadership of Walter 'Crack' Stanley. Because of his ability to read music and play stage shows, Shaw was hired as the drummer. This group remained at the Plantation until 1933.



In 1933 and 1934, Shaw played with Charlie Creath and his orchestra at the Arcadia Ballroom in Saint Louis. Included in this group were:

Charlie Creath on saxophone  
Burroughs Lovingood on piano  
Dewey Jackson on trumpet  
Jimmy Jones on guitar and the vocalist  
Roosevelt Thomas on saxophone.<sup>49</sup>

In the Spring of 1934, Shaw played on the Steamer Saint Paul with the band under the leadership of Charlie Creath, who had now changed instruments from trumpet to saxophone. Also in this group were:

Fate Marable as featured pianist  
Burroughs Lovingood as regular pianist  
John Young, guitarist  
Dewey Jackson, on trumpet  
Clifford King also on trumpet  
Kimble Dial on tenor sax  
Tab Smith and Leon 'Foots' Goodson on Alto saxes  
Leon King on Trombone.

When the boat season ended during this year, 1934, Shaw remained in Saint Louis rather than going to New Orleans with the band. By this time, Shaw had wearied of traveling, and had become more interested in the operation of the musicians union in Saint Louis. As he stated, he he was one of the few active musicians who regularly attended meetings of the musicians union, and when a leader was needed for the newly formed subsidiary local, Shaw was asked to assume this responsibility. He served as president for many years dating from 1933, and one of his greatest ambitions then was the obtaining of another



charter for the Negro musicians of Saint Louis.<sup>50</sup>

As Shaw began and continued his career as a union executive, he continued his activities as drummer.

He was very instrumental in the revival of dixie-land music in Saint Louis, and was one of the jazz pioneers who enjoyed this musical rejuvenation. As he related:

"On May 18, 1949, I was tuning the piano for the Ruths on Washington Avenue in University City, and noticed pictures of exponents of jazz on the walls of the room where I was working. The lady, Mrs. Mary Ruth, asked me about some musicians in and around the city and I suggested that a group be organized and spoke of Dewey Jackson, Norman Mason, Gus Perryman, Edgar Shelton, John Orange, and mentioned that I played drums. We had a session in the form of a barbecue with beer, etc.

Since there was no money involved, some of the boys were not available so some changes were made. Marie Bolar replaced Gus on piano. Several sessions were held and at one time the group met at the E. Clayborne Bush home. Ernie Shapiro, of the Barrel Lounge on Delmar Boulevard, was at this session and saw possibilities. He soon started a Saturday evening jamm session at his bar. The personnel changed to Singleton Palmer, bass; Alfred Guichard, clarinet; Janie Hemingway, piano, who was later replaced by Barbara Sutton, Ralph's sister. We were well received so Shapiro changed the sessions to the Universal Dance Studio for Sundays. Out of this grew our job at the Forest Park Hotel Snack Bar when Bobby Swain heard us and talked Palmer into getting a group together to open on May 22, 1950 for one week. This group was Dewey Jackson, Al Guichard, Robert Carter, trombone, then President of Local No. 197; Gus Perryman, piano; Singleton Palmer, bass viol and tuba; and myself. We



and as a result left the Snack Bar January 1, 1951. Other jobs with different combos included the SS Fort Cage, SS Douglas, (both boats anchored on the Mississippi Riverfront), Desoto Hotel Sunday night sessions sponsored by Dorin and Galbraith."<sup>51</sup>

With the formation of the Singleton Palmer group, and these jam sessions begun by the Ruth's and the efforts of Ernie Shapiro of the Barrel Lounge, dixieland was revived in Saint Louis. Other such groups were later formed, both Negro and white.

Jimmy B. The group under the leadership of Singleton Palmer, continues to be one of the most popular dixieland groups in Saint Louis. Vertna Saunders replaced Dewey Jackson on trumpet, and when Alfred Guichard suffered a stroke while the band was playing on the S.S. Douglas in 1956, his replacements on clarinet were Norman Mason and Kimble Dial.

Bugsy R. Shaw was also very instrumental in the organization of the Saint Louis Jazz Club, a non-profit interracial organization formed for the promotion of jazz and creating appreciation of jazz. Shaw has been vice president of this club since its organization in 1951. Since then the club has been very influential in presenting jazz concerts and jazz panels in the area.

Elling Shaw, as has most of the pioneers of this musical movement, has proven to be an inspiration for younger drummers and musicians in Saint Louis, both as a musician

jam session. On the bandstand was Jimmy Singleton. Their



and as a union executive. As a reward for his sincere service and interest in music and musicians, he was presented with a life membership by Local No. 197 on December the 12th, 1954, the first of such to be awarded.

Shaw is presently a member of the Board of Directors of Local No. 197, and is often called the 'Daddy' of the local, not that he is the oldest member, but because of his many years of service to the organization.

#### Jimmy Blanton 1921-1942

Much credit for the exploitation of the usage of the bass viol in the field of jazz goes to Jimmy Blanton. Blanton was born in Saint Louis, but received his education in Nashville, Tennessee. After attending Tennessee State College there, he returned to Saint Louis and performed with such groups here as the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra, Buggs Roberts, and Fate Marable. Many of the Saint Louis musicians, including this writer, were continuously amazed at the technique and speed of Jimmy Blanton's bass viol playing. His reputation as both a soloist and a steady rhythm musician reached the ears of musicians all over America, and this reputation resulted in Blanton becoming an immortal performer on his instrument. When the Duke Ellington Orchestra played in Saint Louis during 1939, some of the members of his orchestra were playing at the '49' Club on Jefferson Avenue in Saint Louis at an after hour jamm session. On the bandstand was Jimmy Blanton. Their



amazement at the artistry of Blanton caused one of the musicians to phone Ellington to come out and hear this young, talented musician. Ellington heard him and Blanton left Saint Louis with the orchestra as a featured attraction.<sup>52</sup> From here Blanton made musical history.

Among the collectors items of jazz are the recordings featuring Duke Ellington on piano and Jimmy Blanton on bass. Renditions of "Sophisticated Lady" and "Body and Soul" are still considered among the greatest jazz records.

Blanton played with the Duke Ellington orchestra until 1941 when he contracted tuberculosis and died in California.

As was written in the Encyclopedia of Jazz:

"Blanton exercised an incalculable influence in transforming the use of the string bass in jazz. Before his day it had rarely been used for anything but quarter notes, in ensemble or solos.

Blanton improvised as if the bass were a horn phrasing fluently with frequent eighth and sixteenth note runs, using harmonic and melodic ideas that were unheard of on the instrument. The clarity of his tone, the definition and timing of his notes made earlier exponents seem like amateurs. Oscar Pettiford, Ray Brown and almost all the other top bassists acknowledge Blanton's position in jazz history as the pioneer, the first true master of this cumbersome vehicle."<sup>53</sup>



Miles Davis - 1926

In the field of modern or progressive jazz, one of the most prominent figures in the movement is Miles Davis, who began his musical career in Saint Louis. Davis was educated in the East Saint Louis, Illinois public schools and credits Elwood Buchanan, from whom he received musical instructions at Lincoln High School and trumpet lessons, with giving him his first inspiration to become a musician.

The following resume of his career appeared in the Encyclopaedia of Jazz:

"Miles Davis, born in Alton, Illinois on May 25, 1926. His family moved to East Saint Louis in 1927. Father, a dentist, gave him his first trumpet on the day of his thirteenth birthday. Played in the high school band.

Played with Eddie Randle in Saint Louis from 1941 until 1943.

Met Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker when Billy Eckstine's band passed through town. His father sent him to New York to study at Juilliard in 1945. Worked with Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, Bennie Carter; five month tour with Eckstine; back to New York in 1948, led two different bands at Royal Roost; first with Allen Eager, Charlie Parker, Kai Winding; second with a nine piece group that made celebrated Capitol sides. Later gig lasted two weeks and was only one this band ever played. In 1949 played at Paris Jazz Festival. In 1950 and 51 gigs and recording dates in New York City. In 1952 toured with Jazz Inc. unit with Zoot Sims, Milton Jackson. Own small group from time to time in major cities of U.S. since then. Already established as a major figure in jazz history. Style is at times driving, forceful, other



times delicate, also lyrical. Favorites: Dizzy, Freddie Webster, Louis Armstrong, Won Esquire National New Star Award in 1947 - Metronome poll 1951-1953."<sup>54</sup>

When asked about his musical education, Davis replied:

"I went to Juilliard a short while but got most of my music education on 52nd Street when bebop began."<sup>55</sup>

The friendship of Miles Davis and the late Charlie Parker resulted in a musical association which will be long remembered in the annals of American music, for both became among the most imitated jazz musicians. Their many recordings are considered jazz momentos what will be long remembered.

Davis has been the recipient of many top awards as trumpet player through polls conducted by such leading music magazines and periodicals as Down Beat and Metronome. His many successful tours of Europe both as leader and trumpeter with selected jazz groups has established him as an international artist.

#### George Hudson

At the present time, one of the leading dance orchestras in the area is the one headed by George Hudson. Hudson came to Saint Louis in 1934 to join the Jeter-Pillars orchestra at Club Plantation and has been a Saint Louis resident ever since.



Hudson remained with that group for a period of ten years. In 1942, after a season with the Dewey Jackson Orchestra on one of the riverboats, Hudson organized his first orchestra in Saint Louis with many of the prominent jazz musicians in the city as members of his group. The personnel included:

Leon Goodson, sax  
Clifford Batchman, sax  
Irvin Williams, sax  
Lloyd Smith, sax  
Eugene Porter, sax

Walter 'Crack' Stanley, trumpet  
Cyrus Stoner, trumpet  
George Hudson, trumpet  
Sykes Smith, trumpet

Robert Horne, trombone  
Len Bowden, trombone

Julius Wright, piano  
Charles Carter Sr., drums  
James Underwood, bass

From the engagement at Tunetown Ballroom and the Comet Theatre in Saint Louis with the Mills Brothers, the band soon became very popular in the city.

In 1946, the group went to Detroit, Michigan to appear on a theatre engagement with Louis Jordan as headliner. The band made a favorable impression and an extended tour with Louis Jordan resulted. In 1947 the George Hudson band made its first appearance in New York. This engagement was at the Apollo Theatre with Louis Jordan. At this time the group was considered as one of the better dance orchestras in America. In this musical organization were:



Clark Terry, Guydner Campbell and  
Edwin Batchman, trumpets

Willie Parker, Thomas Starks,  
Clifford Batchman, Charles Pillars  
and William Rollin, saxophones

John Orange and Robert Horne, trombones

Robert Parker, piano

Singleton Palmer, bass viol

Earl Martin, drums.

Before this engagement, which was part of a theatre tour to some of the leading cities in the east and midwest, the Hudson band had played for one year at Club Plantation, where they enjoyed the same prominence as the Jeter-Pillars group.

Following the theatre tour, the Hudson band returned to Saint Louis. Other engagements in the east followed.

Among the musicians who performed with the Hudson band and later achieved some prominence in the jazz field were:

Clark Terry,  
Ernest Wilkins

Guydner Campbell, who played with Count Basie among other prominent jazz leaders

Ahmal Jamad (Fritz Jones) is is currently one of the leading pianists and recording artists,

Len Bowden, who became leader of the U. S. Navy Band stationed at Great Lakes, Illinois considered by many as the best group of musicians to perform in one band at any one time.



Hudson, born in Stonewall, Mississippi, was educated in Birmingham, Alabama and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He began his musical activities at the age of six, when he was given piano lessons. He began playing trumpet in 1922 under the instructions of John T. Watley of Birmingham, Alabama, one of the leading Negro music teachers in that part of the south. Before coming to Saint Louis, Hudson was a member of the Bennie Moten Orchestra of Kansas City, Missouri. (From Moten's band came the nucleus of the Count Basie Orchestra which first attained national acclaim.)

Hudson was president of Musicians Union, Subsidiary Local No. 2 from 1940 to 1943. He later served in other such capacities with the Musicians union as business representative, and president's assistant.

In 1950, Hudson became band director and instrumental music instructor at the Lovejoy High School in Brooklyn, Illinois, a position he still maintains.

The present George Hudson Orchestra has among its personnel Walter Lathen, music teacher in the Webster Groves Public School System; William Paul Overby, instrumental music instructor at the Vashon High School; Tilford Brooks, music instructor in the East Saint Louis Public School System; Willie Ray Smith, instructor in the Saint Louis Public School System; Will Carter, instructor in the Saint Louis Public School System; and O'Hara Spearman



one of the instrumental music consultants in the elementary schools of Saint Louis Public School System.

The personnel and occupations of the Hudson Orchestra indicate the change in the jazz field brought about by economic factors. Many jazz musicians during the present times are forced to accept another job, often non-musical in order to meet their financial obligations. A surprising few musicians in Saint Louis depend on music alone for their livelihood.

#### Wendell Marshall - 1920

Among the present day performers in the jazz field on bass viol, Wendell Marshall is one of the foremost. Marshall, born in Saint Louis and educated in the Saint Louis public school system, is another of the Saint Louis musicians who has gained much prominence in the jazz field.

For many years the fact that Marshall was the cousin of the late and great Jimmy Blanton had been a psychological obstacle because so much was expected of him and his playing was always compared to Blanton's. Marshall has developed to the point that he has overcome this obstacle and is now considered as one of the top jazz bassists.

Marshall received advanced education at Lincoln University of Jefferson City, Missouri. After leaving



Lincoln he played for a short while in 1942 with Lionel Hampton and orchestra.

Following the years 1943 until 1946 in service, Marshall resumed his career in Saint Louis where he played with such local musicians as Jimmy Forrest, Buggs Roberts, Bill Jennings, and Joe Smith.

He later joined Stuff Smith's group and in 1947 went to New York to join a group headed by Mercer Ellington, son of Duke Ellington. Mercer introduced Marshall to his father, and Marshall soon became a member of the Duke Ellington Orchestra with which he achieved national prominence as a member for six years.

In 1955 Marshall left the Ellington group and settled in New York to continue his musical career. Since then he has made quite a name for himself as a recording star, soloist and member of many selected jazz groups.

Marshall was a member of the pit band during the Broadway performance of "Mr. Wonderful" which featured Sammy Davis, Jr. and is now a performer on his bass viol in the New York production "Say Darling" which features Vivian Blaine and Johnny Desmond.

Marshall has recorded with many of the top names in jazz and along with Clark Terry, Ernest Wilkins and Miles Davis, maintains the prominence of Saint Louis musicians in the field of jazz.<sup>56</sup>



Clark Terry - 1920

Another of the currently prominent jazz musicians is Clark Terry. Terry, born in Saint Louis and educated in the public schools here began his musical activities as a member of the Tom Powell Drum and Bugle Corps. His career as a jazz musician began after his stint in the U.S. Navy.

As written in the Encyclopedia of Jazz:

"Clark Terry - trumpet player

All star navy band at Great Lakes 1942-1945

After discharge following three weeks with Lionel Hampton, joined George Hudson in Saint Louis for eighteen weeks. Then joined Charlie Barnet for ten months. Briefly with Eddie Vinson, Charlie Ventura and back with Hudson. Then joined Count Basie. Remained with him with small band 1950-51. With Duke Ellington since November 1951. Terry, who uses 'half valve' effect a la Rex Stewart, and double time passages akin to Gillespie, combines the best qualities of both to represent a unique style of his own and is one of the most original trumpet players in contemporary jazzy."<sup>57</sup>

Because of his unique styling on the trumpet, Clark Terry has become a prominent recording artist in New York and California. He has also been selected to appear with many all star jazz groups in different sections of the country.

In May of 1957, Terry was granted leave from the Duke Ellington orchestra to appear as trumpet soloist at Radio City Music Hall in New York during the production "Musicana". He appeared with the Music Hall Symphony under



the direction of Raymond Paige.<sup>58</sup>

### Ernest Wilkins - 1919

As has been mentioned previously, one of the top music arrangers in the field of jazz at the present time is Ernest 'Ernie' Wilkins. Wilkins, born in Saint Louis, was also educated in the Saint Louis Public School System, graduating from Sumner High School where he was in band under the leadership of Stanley Lee Henderson. He began playing saxophone at an early age, and while still a teenager, played with such groups as ones headed by Eddie Randle and Dewey Jackson.

Wilkins and I went to Wilberforce University in 1940 and became members of the Wilberforce Collegians, the school dance band. Before finishing his college education, Wilkins enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1942, and this became the turning point in his music career. From contacts made while in service, and associations plus experience with many of America's foremost jazz musicians while stationed at Great Lakes, Illinois, Wilkins developed into a prominent musician. From Great Lakes Naval Station, Wilkins was sent to the naval base at Hampton, Virginia where he was made leader of the band. Leaving Hampton, Wilkins was selected to attend the Navy school of Music in Washington, D.C.

Following his years in service, Wilkins returned to Saint Louis and played in such groups as the Jeter-



Pillars Orchestra and the George Hudson group. With the Hudson orchestra, his reputation as arranger became well known. Upon recommendation of Clark Terry, who was a member of the Basie band at that time, Wilkins joined the Count Basie orchestra, and has been credited for much of the current success of the band because of his arrangements and original compositions.<sup>59</sup> Wilkins' arrangements seemed to have exploited a modern treatment of the blues, a feature which has made the Basie band one of America's most popular dance bands.

The following appeared in Down Beat magazine:

"If history remembers Ernie Wilkins, as it should, for one particular number, it will be for the wonderful swinging tune whose title seems to epitomize all this group is striving for, "The Blues Done Come Back" and they have."

Wilkin's arrangement of "Every Day I Have the Blues", featuring Joe Williams on the vocal, is one of the most popular of his arrangements for the Basie band. Besides the popularity this song and arrangement brought the band, it also established Williams as one of the nation's top orchestra vocalists.

Wilkins left the Basie band in 1955 and settled in New York concentrating his musical talents on arranging. This was a wise decision, for soon his ability as arranger and jazz composer brought him prominence and financial success. Besides being on the arranging staff of Count groups in Saint Louis.



Basie, Wilkins has also arranged for such prominent leaders as Dizzy Gillespie, the late Tommy Dorsey, Harry James, Don Terry, Ted Heath and Maynard Ferguson. He has conducted the orchestra for record sessions of such leaders in the progressive jazz field as Jimmy Cleveland, Julian Adderley, and Sonny Rollins. He has also arranged music for recordings by such performers as Sarah Vaughn and Dina Washington, and has many albums under his own name. Wilkins is now one of the most sought after arrangers of popular music in New York.

#### Singleton Palmer - 1913

Among the leaders in the recent revival of Dixieland Music in Saint Louis is Singleton Palmer. His becoming leader of what is considered by many as the leading dixieland group in this era was a result of a coincidence. Unlike the other musicians associated with dixieland music in Saint Louis, Palmer was not developed in the dixieland era before, and neither was he exposed to this phase of jazz in earlier years. He was chosen to organize a dixieland group because of his talent, displayed during impromptu jazz sessions, as a bass tuba performer. He chose as members of his group such jazz pioneers as Dewey Jackson, Elijah W. Shaw and Thomas 'Gus' Perryman, all familiar with the dixieland idiom, and this group developed into one of the most prominent dixieland groups in Saint Louis.



Palmer, a native of Saint Louis received his early education in the Saint Louis Public School System attending Sumner High School where he played trumpet in the school orchestra which was under the direction of C. Spencer Tocus. He had no formal music instructions, but joined the beginners band of the Odd Fellows Lodge where he was under the tutelage of P. G. Langford. Later he joined the senior Odd Fellows Band as trumpet player.

While playing in jazz bands under the leadership of Mose Wiley, Palmer was asked if he thought he could play the bass horn, as the orchestra needed one. He volunteered to do this, and soon made a complete switch from trumpet to bass horn. Later he played bass horn with jazz orchestras under the leadership of Oliver Cobb and Eddie Johnson.

In 1933, Palmer began playing bass viol with the Eddie Johnson Orchestra. He later performed on bass viol with Dewey Jackson and George Hudson. Palmer joined the Count Basie Orchestra in 1948 and remained with this group until 1950. Returning to Saint Louis, he again played with the leading jazz musicians in the era, playing bass horn with brass bands organized among members of Local No. 197.

In 1950, as a result of many jazz sessions, and attempts of various individuals to revive dixieland music in Saint Louis, Palmer organized the Dixieland Six to play an engagement at The Forest Park Snack Bar. Since then the



group has been very active in the Saint Louis area with the personnel changing from time to time. Of the original group (See page **349**) there remains Gus Perryman, piano; Elijah W. Shaw, drums; Robert Carter, trombone; and Palmer on bass horn. Vertna Saunders replaced Dewey Jackson on trumpet, and Kimble Dial replaced Alfred Guichard on clarinet. Guichard, a native of New Orleans, was considered one of the best of the dixieland clarinet players when a stroke curtailed his musical activities.

As a performer on the tuba, Palmer is considered by many as one of the best. He is chosen to play with most of the all star jazz groups in the area, and has been lauded in articles which appeared in the Saint Louis newspapers and has received mention in music periodicals.

#### Other Jazz Musicians in Saint Louis

Besides the musicians mentioned in this chapter, there are many others who have pioneered and helped foster the jazz movement among the musicians in Saint Louis. Harvey Langford was one of the prominent leaders during the 1920's and 1930's, and his group called the 'Snyco High Hatters' performed for many of the social affairs in the Saint Louis area. Eddie Randle, one of the first of the Negro leaders in the jazz field to have a regular radio program, has been a longtime favorite in the area. Harry Winn, with whom I began my activities in the jazz field, is another of these musicians still active. With



this band, I had my first road experience as a jazz musician when, just after graduation from high school, with the Harry Winn Orchestra, I toured through the southern and midwestern section of the country.

During recent years among the nation's recording musicians who have enjoyed national prominence are Saint Louisans James 'Jimmy' Forrest, Tab Smith, and Tommy Dean.

Currently Negro jazz groups are appearing all over the Saint Louis area in their effort to restore Saint Louis as a music center. Saint Louis has lost much of its prominence as a jazz center as a result of many factors. Saint Louis, once the cradle of ragtime, one of the leading centers for development of the blues, one of the headquarters for riverboat jazz, and the home of many of the top jazz musicians, has become, as many of the cities during these days, a suburban town. There is little theatrical and night club life. This seems to be the era of staying at home viewing television, or going to the movies, especially with the popularity of the drive-in theatres, many of which stay open the year round. Other factors which have caused the decline of Saint Louis as a music center, and as a jazz center are: the location of major recording studios in such cities as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles; lack of jazz promotion in the city; rigid closing hour restrictions in



the city and state, which has prevented clubs to operate as Club Plantation and Club Riviera did in the past; the attitude of civic leaders against night life, and the fact that the general public does not have the money to spend for night life.

From my experience as a jazz musician I can say that when the night clubs in Saint Louis were permitted to stay open all night, the city was flourishing with activities for musicians. Prominent jazz musicians were constantly hired in the city at the leading night spots. This proved inspirational to the aspiring young jazz musicians. Now, most of the musicians feel they have to leave Saint Louis to attain any success in the music field. For commercial reasons, most of the disc jockeys continually present to the listening public very little of the better type of jazz music. Thus when many of the leading jazz artists come to Saint Louis, the general public knows little about them because the musicians are not featured over their favorite radio station.

On July the 27th, 1958 there was presented at Kiel Auditorium the first Saint Louis Jazz Festival. There was an all star dixieland group led by Singleton Palmer, and I headed the all star modern jazz group. With the popularity of jazz festivals in various sections of the country, it was thought such an idea would be successful in Saint Louis. Count Basie was the feature



attraction at this festival. Musically speaking, the concert was a success, according to the enthusiasm of the audience, but it was a failure financially, displaying to the promoters and the music loving public that Saint Louis is no longer the music center it was.

There are many young jazz musicians in Saint Louis for whom a bright future and successful career in music is predicted. Among these are:

Oliver E Nelson, alto saxophone stylist and arranger who was offered a job with the Count Basie band while in high school, and toured the states with Louis Jordan and his orchestra before his stint with the U. S. Marines.

Hugh David 'Peanuts' Whalum, tenor saxophonist, who formerly played with Lionel Hampton.

Grant Green, guitarist

Christopher Woods, alto saxophonist

Samuel Lazard, organist

Albert St. James, drummer

Hattush Alexander, tenor saxophonist

Charles Carter, Jr., drummer

William Erskine, who is currently drummer with the Earl Bostic Combo

John Mixon, who has joined the Lionel Hampton Orchestra on the bass viol after having been a member of my jazz group for one and one-half years

Lloyd Anderson, bass viol performer

Floyd H. Hopkins, who has been selected as drummer for a jazz group to be formed for a state sponsored tour of South America.



## FOOTNOTES for CHAPTER VI

1. According to information from private notes of the late Harry Burke, who for many years was music critic and writer for the Saint Louis Globe Democrat. These notes are now in the possession of Ernst Krohn of the Department of Music of Saint Louis University.
2. Ibid.
3. From article entitled "Ragtime Melody" which appeared in the Fall, 1955 issue of Union Electric Magazine published by Union Electric Company of Saint Louis, Missouri
4. Ibid
5. Blesh, Rudi and Janis, Harriet  
They All Played Ragtime  
Page 41. Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1950
6. Ibid, p. 51
7. Ibid
8. A copy of Tremonishia was in the possession of W. C. Handy and was viewed during my interview with Handy on June the 18th, 1956.
9. "The Father of the Jazz Age" from the publication YOUR SAINT LOUIS AND MINE. N. B. Young Publishers, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1937.
10. Blesh, Rudi and Janis, Harriet  
They All Played Ragtime  
Page 262. Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1950
11. Ibid, page 262
12. Information obtained from Matthews during the convention of the American Federation of Musicians held in Atlantic City, New Jersey in 1956. Matthews an official from Local No. 814 of Cincinnati, Ohio, was a delegate from his local. I was a delegate



from Local No. 197 in Saint Louis. Matthews heads the Cosmopolitan School of Music in Cincinnati.

13. Blesch, Rudi and Janis, Harriet

They All Played Ragtime

Page 264. Alfred A. Knopf Co., 1950

14. Handy, W. C.

Father of the Blues

Page 93. MacMillan Company, New York City, 1947.

15. Ibid, Pages 93-94

16. Ibid, Pages 28-29

17. The article mentioned appeared in the February 9th edition of the Chicago American a Chicago, Illinois newspaper.

18. Information obtained during an interview with W. C. Handy at his home on June the 18th, 1956

19. The newspaper strip 'Saint Louis Oddities' appears in Sunday issues of the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch, written by Ralph Craczak. This article appeared in the February 26th, 1956 edition.

20. Information from publicity release THE HANDY NEWS, October, 1953 issue. This release is published periodically by the Music House of Handy, 1650 Broadway in New York City.

21. Copyrights on songs are good for periods of twenty-eight years, and after this time, new copyrights must be obtained.

22. This is a portion of a column written by Bob Goddard entitled 'In Our Town' which appeared in the July 12th, 1951 edition of the Saint Louis Globe Democrat. The column still appears daily.

23. For answer received from Handy see Appendix XVI.

24. Jazz breaks in compositions are ad-lib phrases played by a performer while the other musicians stop temporarily. This is very common in the present day blues-both vocal and instrumental.



25. Blesh, Rudi  
Shining Trumpets, A History of Jazz  
Alfred A. Knopf Publishers, New York City, 1949.
26. From article entitled "Riverboat Jazz and the Story of a Legendary Saint Louisan Who Made it Click". This article was first published in the Saint Louis Globe Democrat on July 22, 1945 and was reprinted in the Jazz Record in the March, 1946 edition. The original article was written by Beulah Schacht.
27. Ibid
28. Norman Mason, former trumpet player with Fate Marable, gave this information during an interview on September the 16th, 1956.
29. Blesh, Rudi  
Shining Trumpets, A History of Jazz  
Alfred A. Knopf Publishers, New York City, 1949  
Page 217-281.
30. Op. Cit. Footnote 26 of this chapter
31. Op. Cit. Footnote 26 of this chapter
32. According to information received from Norman Mason during an interview on September the 16th, 1956
33. Ibid
34. Among the 1958 appearances of Mason in jazz concerts was one sponsored at Washington University by the Zeta Nu Chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, and the First Annual Saint Louis Jazz Festival held at Kiel Auditorium.
35. Most of the information concerning Dewey Jackson was obtained during an interview on March the 23rd, 1955.
36. This song, written by 'Stump' Jackson, exemplifies the type of blues which were popular during these days. The words to these songs were usually risqué and suggestive, thus keeping this type of song in the class of a degrading popular song.



36. continued -

First verse:

"Mama bought a rooster, thought it was a duck  
Put it on the table with its legs straight up,  
In came the children with a cup and a glass,  
Trying to get the 'likker' from its Yas Yas Yas".

From this verse, as many of the blues during these days, others follow getting more suggestive and risqué.

Performers would often add verses extemporaneously.

37. Information concerning the early blues singers in Saint Louis was obtained from Robert 'Bob' Koester, of the Bluenote Recording Shop in Saint Louis who has done much research on early jazz in Saint Louis.
38. Ibid
39. From information concerning the Saint Louis Crackerjacks obtained from Joseph 'Chick' Finney, one of the members of the group who is currently theatrical editor of the Saint Louis Argus, Negro weekly. He recently wrote a feature article on the Saint Louis Crackerjacks.
40. Ibid
41. According to information obtained from Hayes Pillars during interview on August the 13th, 1958 when most of the information concerning the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra was discussed.
42. A. G. Godley, who Hayes Pillars called 'the Dean of the Drums' wrote a drum book which became somewhat of a study book for drummers.
43. Blanton joined the band while a student at Tennessee State College in Nashville, Tennessee. According to Pillars, they bought him his first bass viol.
44. Quoted by Pillars during interview.



45. This was a very successful engagement and very profitable, for while appearing at the Apollo Theatre, Pillars was approached concerning a possible U.S.O. tour, both in the United States and overseas. Fortunately this became a reality.
46. This article appeared in the April 28th, 1946 edition of 'Stars and Stripes' (Shin-i-wate Nippo English Edition.) Newspaper for servicemen overseas.
47. WHO'S WHO IN COLORED AMERICA, 7th Edition, 1950  
An illustrated biographical directory of notable living persons of African descent in the United States. Published by Christian E. Burckel and Associates of Yonkers, New York.
48. This information and much other information concerning Elijah W. Shaw appeared in an article entitled 'The Drums Never Rested' which appeared in the April, 1954 edition of 'The Record Changer', page 11.
49. This was an interview with Shaw by Vivian Oswald, Changer Publications Incorporated of Chicago, Illinois.
50. History of the Negro musicians union of Saint Louis is in Appendix
51. The Record Changer  
Page 12, April 1954, edition
52. When the band left Saint Louis, Ellington featured Blanton as soloist, retaining his other bass viol player. Soon Blanton became a regular member of the orchestra, and other bass player was released.
53. Feather, Leonard  
  
The Encyclopedia of Jazz  
Horizon Press, New York City, 1955
54. Ibid, page 126



55. Statement made during an appearance of Davis' jazz group in Saint Louis at Peacock Alley
56. An article entitled 'Marshall, Bass on Own After Six Years With Duke', appears in Appendix XVIII. This article includes details of his musical career and also information concerning Jimmy Blanton.

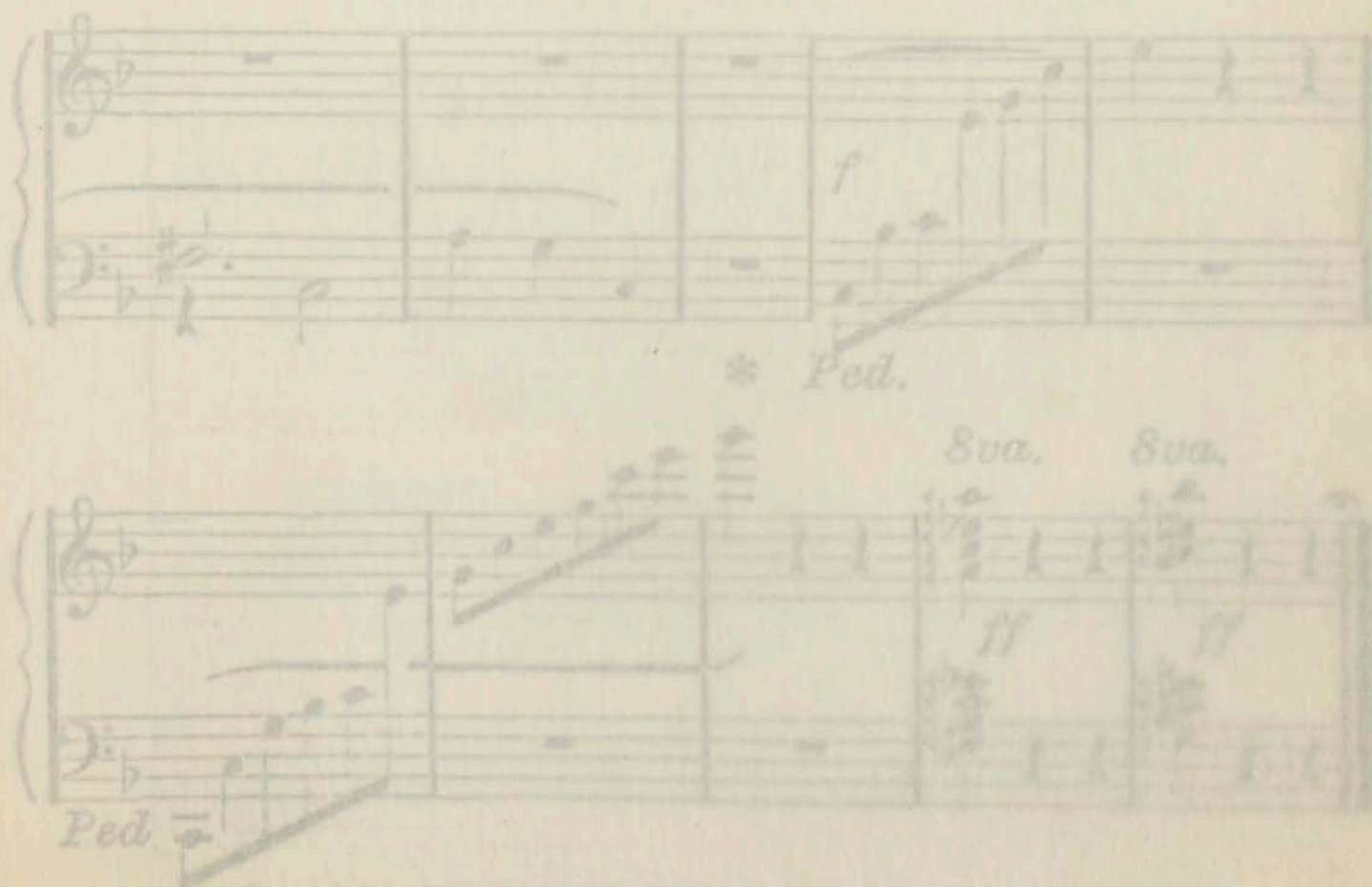
57. Feather, Leonard

The Encyclopedia of Jazz  
Horizons Press, New York City, 1955

58. For article on Terry, see Appendix XXIX

59. One night in June of 1956 this writer was in New York at Birdland (jazz center) with Wilkins when during a set by the Count Basie band, Wilkins was announced as one individual who was responsible for music of the success of the Basie band as a result of his arrangements.

60. From article entitled 'Ernie Wilkins Epitomizes Spirit of Blues with Swinging Basie Band', which appeared in the September 8th, 1954 edition of Down Beat Magazine.





## LA CAPRICIEUSE.

## VALSE.

BASILE BARÈS. Op. 7.

*Con affetto.*

First system of musical notation. Treble and bass staves. Treble staff has a fermata over the first three measures. Bass staff starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. A pedaling instruction (*Ped.*) is at the end of the system.

Second system of musical notation. Treble and bass staves. Treble staff has a fermata over the first two measures. Bass staff has a half note (bd.) in the first measure. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4.

Third system of musical notation. Treble and bass staves. Treble staff has a fermata over the first three measures. Bass staff has a forte (*f*) dynamic in the fourth measure. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. A pedaling instruction with an asterisk (*\* Ped.*) is at the end of the system.

Fourth system of musical notation. Treble and bass staves. Treble staff has an 8va. (octave up) instruction in the fifth measure. Bass staff has a forte (*ff*) dynamic in the fifth measure. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. A pedaling instruction (*Ped*) is at the beginning of the system.



*Con eleganza.*  
*Valse.*

The first system of musical notation is for a waltz in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. It consists of two staves. The right staff has a treble clef and the left staff has a bass clef. The music begins with a rest in the right hand and a whole note chord in the left hand. The right hand then plays a series of eighth notes, and the left hand plays a series of eighth notes. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed between the staves. The system ends with a repeat sign.

The second system of musical notation continues the waltz. It consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes, and the left hand plays a series of eighth notes. The system ends with a repeat sign.

The third system of musical notation continues the waltz. It consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes, and the left hand plays a series of eighth notes. The system ends with a repeat sign.

The fourth system of musical notation continues the waltz. It consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes, and the left hand plays a series of eighth notes. The dynamic marking *cres* is placed between the staves. The system ends with a repeat sign.

*brillante.*

The fifth system of musical notation continues the waltz. It consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes, and the left hand plays a series of eighth notes. The dynamic marking *f* is placed between the staves. The system ends with a repeat sign.



## LA CAPRICIEUSE. Continued.

First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The bass clef staff contains a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The dynamic marking *dim* is present.

Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The bass clef staff contains a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The dynamic marking *f* is present. The marking *8va.* is above the treble staff. The marking *ff* is below the bass staff. The marking *Ped. 2<sup>a</sup>* is below the bass staff.

Third system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The bass clef staff contains a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The marking *8va.* is above the treble staff. The marking *\** is below the bass staff.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The bass clef staff contains a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The marking *f* is present. The marking *8va.* is above the treble staff.

Fifth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The bass clef staff contains a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The dynamic marking *dim* is present.



First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The bass clef staff provides harmonic support with chords. The system concludes with a fortissimo (*ff*) chord. Above the treble staff, the instruction *8va.* is written with a wavy line, and below the bass staff, *Ped.* is indicated.

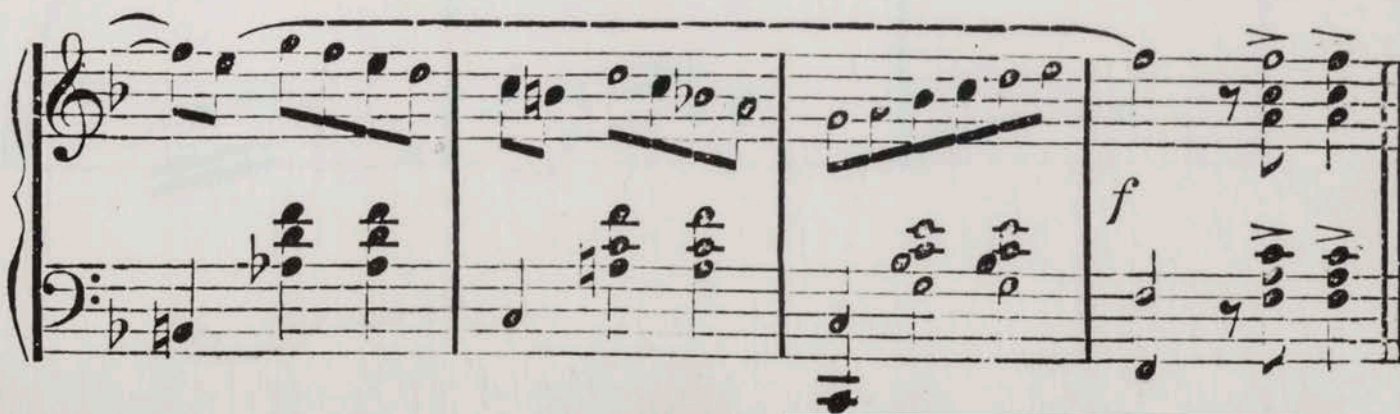
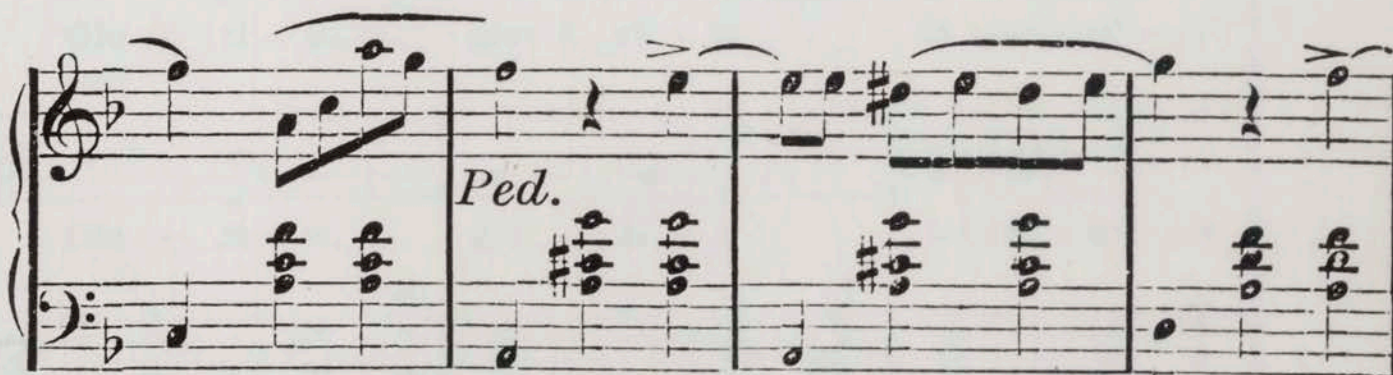
Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line, marked with *8va.* and a wavy line. The bass clef staff continues with chords. The system ends with a double bar line.

Third system of musical notation. The treble clef staff features a melodic line with slurs and accents, starting with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The bass clef staff continues with chords.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line with slurs and accents. The bass clef staff continues with chords.

Fifth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line with slurs and accents. The bass clef staff continues with chords.







# MASS

## FOR THREE VOICES.

### GLORIA.

By SAMUEL SNAER, New Orleans.

*Allegretto.*

*f* *trompette.*

The first system of the Gloria begins with a piano introduction. The music is in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). The upper staff, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic, contains a trumpet part with a series of eighth-note runs. The lower staff is a bass line, mostly consisting of rests and a few notes.

The second system continues the piano introduction. The trumpet part in the upper staff continues with eighth-note runs, while the bass line in the lower staff remains mostly at rest.

1st Tenor.

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis

The 1st Tenor part is written on a single staff in G major and common time. It begins with a half note G, followed by quarter notes A and B, and then a half note G. The lyrics "Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis" are written below the staff.

2d Tenor.

Glo - ri - a,.... glo - ri - a .... in ex - cel - sis

The 2d Tenor part is written on a single staff in G major and common time. It begins with a half note G, followed by quarter notes A and B, and then a half note G. The lyrics "Glo - ri - a,.... glo - ri - a .... in ex - cel - sis" are written below the staff.

Bass.

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis

The Bass part is written on a single staff in G major and common time. It begins with a half note G, followed by quarter notes A and B, and then a half note G. The lyrics "Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis" are written below the staff.

*f*

The final system of the Gloria features a piano accompaniment. The upper staff, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic, contains a series of chords and arpeggiated figures. The lower staff contains a bass line with eighth-note runs and chords.



De - o, glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis

De - o, glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis

De - o, glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis

The piano accompaniment features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature. It begins with a series of chords and then moves to a more melodic line. The bass staff also has a key signature of two sharps and a common time signature, starting with a series of chords and then moving to a more melodic line.

De - o.

*p* SOLO.

De - o. Et in ter - ra pax ho -

*p* SOLO.

De - o. Et in ter - ra pax ho - mi - ni - bus.

The piano accompaniment features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature. It begins with a series of chords and then moves to a more melodic line. The bass staff also has a key signature of two sharps and a common time signature, starting with a series of chords and then moving to a more melodic line.



*p* SOLO.

Et in ter - ra pax ho - mi - ni - bus,

- mi - ni - bus,

TUTTI.

*f* bo - næ vo - lun - ta - - tis,

*p* Lau - da - mus

*f* bo - næ vo - lun - ta - - tis,

*p* Lau - da - mus

*f* bo - næ vo - lun - ta - - tis,

*p* Lau - da - mus



## GLORIA. Continued.

te, lauda - mus te, be - ne - di - ci - mus te, A - do - ramus

te, lauda - mus te, be - ne - di - ci - mus te, A - do - ramus

te, lauda - mus te, be - ne - di - ci - mus te, A - do - ramus

The first system of the musical score consists of three vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal staves are in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "te, lauda - mus te, be - ne - di - ci - mus te, A - do - ramus". The piano accompaniment features a treble and bass staff with a key signature of one sharp. The melody in the vocal staves is a simple, rhythmic line, while the piano accompaniment provides a harmonic foundation with chords and moving lines.

te, A - do - ramus te, glori - fi - camus te.

te, A - do - ramus te, glori - fi - camus te.

te, A - do - ramus te, glori - fi - camus te.

The second system of the musical score continues the vocal and piano parts. The vocal staves have the lyrics: "te, A - do - ramus te, glori - fi - camus te.". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar harmonic structure, featuring a treble and bass staff with a key signature of one sharp. The melody in the vocal staves is a simple, rhythmic line, while the piano accompaniment provides a harmonic foundation with chords and moving lines. The system concludes with a forte (f) dynamic marking and a final chord in the piano accompaniment.



diminuendo.

A piano introduction in D major, 2/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The piece concludes with a *diminuendo* marking.

1st Tenor. DUO.

*Moderato.*  
*dol.*

Gra - ti - as a - gi - mus ti - bi, gra - ti - as

The 1st Tenor part is written in a single staff in D major, 2/4 time. It begins with a half rest followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The lyrics are: Gra - ti - as a - gi - mus ti - bi, gra - ti - as.

2d Tenor.

Gra - ti - as a - gi - mus ti - bi, gra - ti - as

The 2d Tenor part is written in a single staff in D major, 2/4 time. It follows a similar rhythmic pattern to the 1st Tenor. The lyrics are: Gra - ti - as a - gi - mus ti - bi, gra - ti - as.

*Moderato.*

*p dol.*

The piano accompaniment for the tenor duo is written in two staves (treble and bass clef) in D major, 2/4 time. It features a simple harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The piece begins with a *p dol.* (piano, dolce) marking.

a - gi - mus ti - bi prop - ter mag - nam glo - ri - am

a - gi - mus ti - bi prop - ter mag - nam glo - ri - am

This section contains the musical notation for the vocal parts, including the 1st and 2d Tenors and the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: a - gi - mus ti - bi prop - ter mag - nam glo - ri - am. The notation is in D major, 2/4 time, with the piano accompaniment providing a harmonic support for the vocal lines.



tu - am, Do - mi - ne De - us rex cœ - les - tis,

tu - am, Do - mi - ne De - us rex cœ - les - tis,

The first system consists of five measures. The vocal parts (Soprano and Alto) sing the lyrics "tu - am, Do - mi - ne De - us rex cœ - les - tis,". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

De - - - us pa - - ter om - - ni - po -

De - - - us pa - - ter om - - ni - po -

The second system consists of six measures. The vocal parts sing "De - - - us pa - - ter om - - ni - po -". The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a moving bass line.

*Allegretto.*  
- tens.

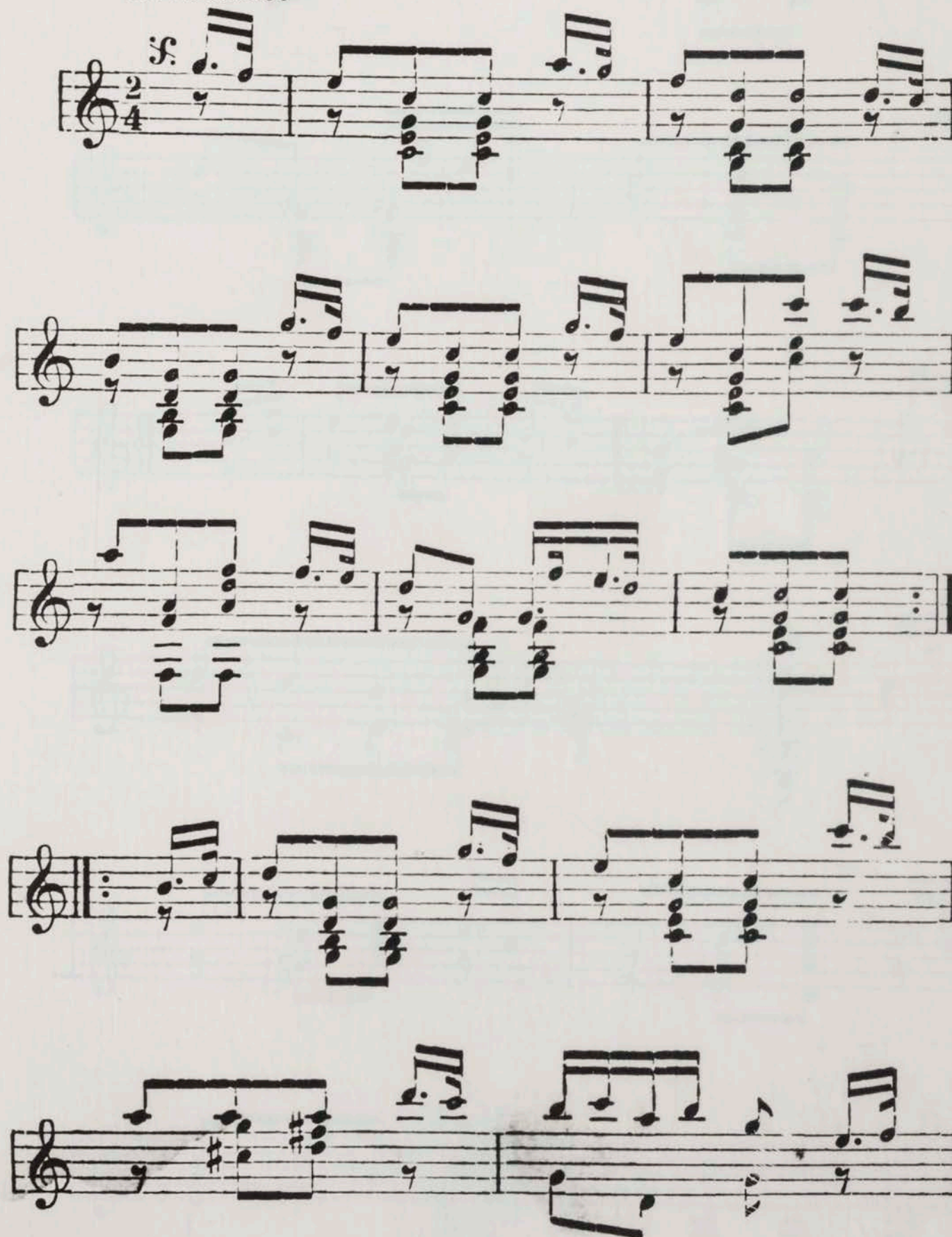
*Allegretto.*  
- tens.

*Allegretto.*  
*f*

The third system begins with the tempo marking *Allegretto.* and the instruction *f* (forte). It consists of five measures. The vocal parts have rests, indicated by "tens.". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in both hands.



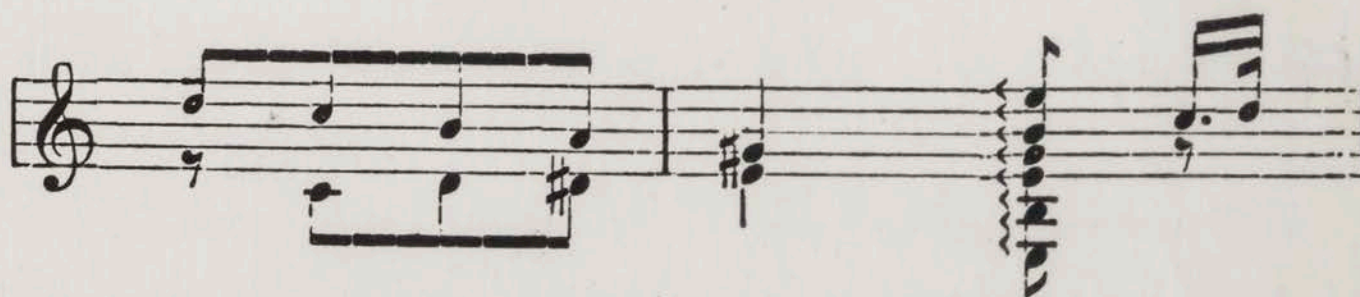
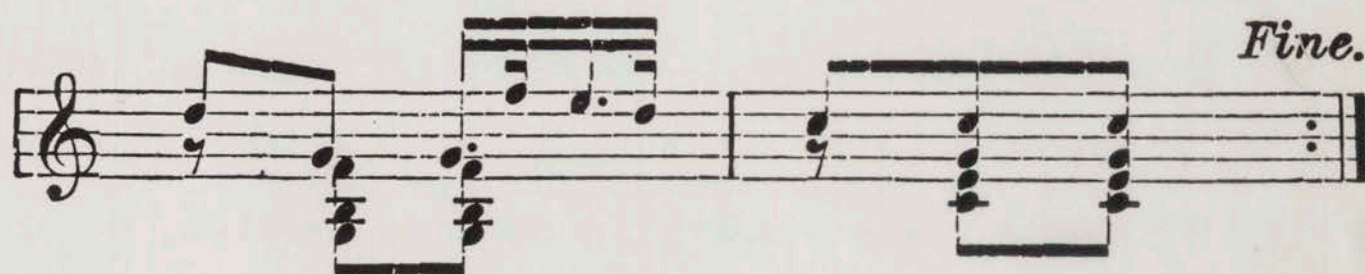
## AN ANDANTE.

*For the Guitar, by JUSTIN HOLLAND.**Andante.*



387  
AN ANDANTE., Continued.

27





## APPENDIX III

"OL SATCHMO - UNCLE SAM'S HAPPY AMBASSADOR"

London, May 26 (AP)

An earnest, deadly serious European student pulled out his pencil and looked Louis Daniel Armstrong straight in his saucer-like eyes.

'Mr. Armstrong,' said the young man who was gathering music material for a ponderous treatise on new art forms, 'What do you think of folk music?'

Satchmo's enormous, rubbery mouth stretched into a big smile.

'Folk music,' said Armstrong with characteristic gentleness, 'why, Daddy, I don't know no other kind of music but folk music - I ain't never heard a hoss sing a song.'

The reply was typical of the 55 year old American Negro whose lyrical trumpet has carried him from a reform school in New Orleans to a familiar friendship with European royalty.

Born in a back alley in New Orelans on a sultry Fourth of July night, 1900, Louis Armstrong has become a legend in his lifetime and in Europe and other parts of the world, a happy ambassador of the United States.

What does the State Department - which has spent millions of dollars in an effort to sell the American way of life to foreigners - think of Armstrong as an official envoy?

'He's very, very useful,' said a spokesman of the



United States Embassy in London, 'and he's most helpful.'

For a diplomat that's tantamount to saying in jazz language - 'the cat's terrific.'

Armstrong doesn't cost the American taxpayer a cent, but don't get the impression that the high priest of the hot trumpet free-wheels around the world solely for free and his love for the Red, White and Blue.

#### Greatest Virtuoso of the Age

Louis Armstrong collects money, and plenty of it, for his far-flung concerts of Dixieland music played the same way he learned to play it way down yonder in New Orleans.

His fee for his current British tour is \$5,000 a night, and he's playing seventeen nights - which costs \$85,000.

Why do people of various colors, creeds and nationalities pay to listen to the relatively simple music as played by Satchmo?

'Well,' said Louis, 'it's happy music, and as long as you hit the note right on the nose they understand you.'

How good is Armstrong?

The late Constant Lambert, distinguished British composer, conductor and critic said of him:

'He is the greatest virtuoso of the age.'

Article appeared in May 27, 1956 issue of the Saint Louis Globe-Democrat. Article written by Eddy Gilmore of the Associated Press.



Satchmo is an enormous character, part clown and part musician, who sincerely believes in the saying:

'When you play jazz, you don't lie. You play from your heart.'

Actually, he can't define jazz, but he cocked his round head to one side when someone said:

'Jazz is a lazy summer afternoon ... it is the girl you love ... it's boiling honey ... it's Tchaikovsky's Sixth ... and it's spinach.'

'That's something' like it,' smiled Louis."

She recorded her first session accompanied by Clarence Williams on February 17, 1923. The Negro public in both the North and South accorded an unprecedented reception to the record. By the end of her first year as a recording artist, Bessie Smith had sold over two million records, was the headliner in Milton Stern's Negro vaudeville circuit, and was on her way to becoming the most successful Negro entertainer in the world.

In the years of her greatest fame, from 1924 to 1927, she recorded frequently, accompanied by the great jazz artists of the day, Louis Armstrong, Joe Smith, Don Redman, James P. Johnson, Charlie Green and Fletcher Henderson were among those who participated in some of

Article appeared in May 27, 1956 issue of the Saint Louis Globe-Democrat. Article written by Eddy Gilmore of the Associated Press.



## APPENDIX IV

"BESSIE SMITH: - - - Singer

Born: Chattanooga, Tennessee, probably  
around 1900

Died: Clarksdale, Mississippi, September 26,  
1937

Born and raised in the most brutal of Southern Negro poverty. She was in her teens when the touring unit known as Ma Rainey's Rabbit Foot Minstrels passed through Chattanooga, and Ma Rainey, herself a pioneer blues singer, took Bessie on the road with the show. For several years she worked in honky tonks, carnivals, and traveling tent shows.

She recorded her first session accompanied by Clarence Williams on February 17, 1923. The Negro public in both the North and South accorded an unprecedented reception to the record. By the end of her first year as a recording artist, Bessie Smith had sold over two million records, was the headliner in Milton Starr's Negro vaudeville circuit, and was on her way to becoming the most successful Negro entertainer in the country.

In the years of her greatest fame, from 1924 to 1927, she recorded frequently accompanied by the great jazz artists of the day, Louis Armstrong, Joe Smith, Don Redman, James P. Johnson, Charlie Green and Fletcher Henderson were among those who participated in some of her most memorable sessions.



Married to Jack Gee, a Philadelphia policeman who at that time handled her affairs, Bessie began slipping in about 1928 for a variety of reasons, among them being the changing public taste, drastic revisions in the type of material she was recording, and her own increasing addiction of alcohol. By 1930 she was virtually washed as a recording artist entirely. One night in September, 1937, just before Hammond was to leave for Mississippi to bring her to New York for another session she was in an automobile crash. According to most reports, she was refused admission to a hospital because of her color and bled to death while being taken to another.

In her lifetime, Bessie Smith, known as the 'Empress of the Blues', was a big tall handsome woman who exercised her audiences. In the 1920's her audience was the American Negro public. During her declining years she was discovered by more and more serious students of jazz and folk music. After her death her value as artist rather than as mere entertainer achieved full recognition. Shortly after she died John Hammond wrote:

'To my way of thinking, Bessie Smith was the greatest artist American jazz ever produced; in fact, I'm not sure that her art didn't reach beyond the limits of the term 'jazz'. She was one of those rare beings, a completely integrated artist capable of projecting her whole personality into music".



The preceeding article appeared as record notes for recording: EMARCY RECORDS

RECORD: "Dinah Sings Bessie Smith" - Artist: Dinah Washington. Mercury Records MC 36130

Article taken from one which appeared in Encyclopedia of Jazz by Leonard Feather.

He was born of a family which began the study of the violin. For three years he attended Oberlin College, after which he went to Berlin where he became a pupil of Joachim, the violinist. His health forced him to return home about the time 'Ragtime' was spreading northward. According to Cook this was about 1893. A number of Negro companies had been organized about this time, and at the suggestion of George Walker, Cook wrote some of the choruses. Lyrics of Paul Lawrence Dunbar were set to melodies founded upon plantation hymns, and finally Cook's operetta, 'Clorinda', or 'The Origin of the Cake-Walk' was produced at the Casino Roof Garden in New York, and created a sensation. The song 'Oh Emancipation Day' became a pattern for later white composers, while the swaying rhythms of 'That's How the Cake Walk's Done' greatly influenced the stage dances that followed. In 1919-1920 Cook toured American and European cities with his 'American Syncopated Orchestra' which was the finest aggregation of musicians ever before heard in what is termed distinctly Negro music.

Cook later conducted the Glee Orchestra, a like



## APPENDIX V

## WILL MARION COOK

"Foremost among the Negro composers of musical comedy is Will Marion Cook. He was born of educated parents in Detroit, Michigan. While a boy soprano, he began the study of the violin. For three years he attended Oberlin College, after which he went to Berlin where he became a pupil of Joachim, the violinist. Ill health forced him to return home about the time 'Ragtime' was spreading northward. According to Cook this was about 1898. A number of Negro companies had been organized about this time, and at the suggestion of George Walker, Cook wrote some of the choruses. Lyrics of Paul Lawrence Dunbar were set to melodies founded upon plantation hymns, and finally Cook's operatta, 'Clorinda', or 'The Origin of the Cake-Walk' was produced at the Casino Roof Garden in New York, and created a sensation. The song 'On Emancipation Day' became a pattern for later white composers, while the swaying rhythm's of 'That's How the Cake Walk's Done' greatly influenced the stage dances that followed. In 1919-1920 Cook toured American and European cities with his 'American Syncopated Orchestra' which was the finest aggregation of musicians ever before heard in what is termed distinctly Negro music.

Cook later conducted the Clef Orchestra, a like



organization of skilled Negro performers. He has held to his avowed intention to work only in the Negro idiom, but while doing so, he has produced music of undoubted worth. Cook, who was a pupil of Anton Dvorak, had universal praise for his orchestrations. A London paper of May 16, 1903 stated: 'The work of Mr. Cook, the composer, stands out prominently in several of the numbers one could not listen to more excellent orchestration, and his music displays true dramatic perception'.

An orchestra leader, Cook is musically well equipped and able to discern the excellent points in music of syncopated type. He developed the primitive jazz and selected trained musicians for interpreters. Of four characteristic songs written by the composer a few years ago, 'Exhortation', a Negro sermon, 'The Rain Song', 'Swing Along' and 'Wid the Moon', Moon, Moon, '.

Kurt Schlinder said:

'Mr. Cook's work at its best means no less than finding the proper musical correlative to the Negro idiom, and thus adding a new territory to musical geography.'

supply the many steamboats along the riverfront with food supplies. He was a thorough business man and was said to be worth about \$20,000.00.

He was so less enterprising in matters of religion. He was the first Negro pastor of the First Baptist Church, which became an independent body in 1827. The number-



## APPENDIX VI

"REVEREND JOHN BERRY MEACHUM

He was born a slave in Virginia, May 3, 1789, and by industry purchased his freedom. He next purchased the freedom of his father, who a Baptist preacher in Virginia. He moved to Kentucky where he married a slave and where he professed Christ. His wife's master moved to Missouri and Meachum followed to Saint Louis, arriving with \$3.00 in his pocket, in 1815. Being a carpenter and a copper he soon obtained work; and the first thing was to purchase the freedom of his wife and children. Under the tutelage and direction of the famous John M. Peck, he commenced preaching and was ordained in 1825. In the next ten years he purchased, including adults and children, about twenty slaves. He never sold them again. His method was to place them at service, encourage them to form habits of industry and economy and when they had paid for themselves, he set them free. In 1835 he built a steamboat which he provided with a library and made it a temperance boat; he used it to supply the many steamboats along the riverfront with food supplies. He was a thorough business man and was said to be worth about \$25,000.00.

He was no less enterprising in matters of religion. He was the first Negro pastor of the First Baptist Church, which became an independent body in 1827. The member-



ship at this time consisted of about 220 members, 200 of them were slaves. A large Sabbath school, a temperance society, a deep-toned missionary spirit, order and correctness among the slave population, strict and regular discipline in the church, were among the fruits of his arduous and preserving labors in Saint Louis. He also opened in the basement of the brick church on Almond Street, a day school manned by an Englishman whom he employed, and though against the law, many Negro children were taught here, their parents paying a dollar a month for them. This school was broken up by the authorities one afternoon, and the teacher was arrested.

Meachum's constant and never-failing friend and advisor was the faithful J.M. Peck. The first money which Rev. Peck received in his campaign for funds for Shurtluff College in upper Alton, Illinois was given by the First Baptist Church in 1835.

After thirty-eight years of faithful service, Reverend John Berry Meachum died suddenly in his pulpit, Sunday morning February 19, 1854."

Information obtained from the History of Central Baptist Church, published by the King Publishing Company, Saint Louis. Copyrighted 1927 by George E. Stevens D.D. Pastor of Central Baptist Church.

Article also appeared in Allen's register of Mississippi River Transportation, 1938



## APPENDIX VII

## P.B. LANGFORD

"P. B. Langford was born near Potosi, Missouri. His mother was a very intelligent lady that put forth every effort to have her children learn some profession. It was then that Langford began to study music at the age of eleven years.

He soon joined the second known Negro band to be organized in Missouri.

At that time no colored teacher could be found, and the prejudice was so great that his father built a band hall on his farm just outside the city limits for the boys which were ten in number, and sent to Philadelphia for a teacher, who was white.

After three months of teaching, the boys began to show signs of apparent success and the teacher soon received a notice that he had better leave town and not be caught teaching any more Negroes in that town or there would be a Dutchman found hanging from a tree, and becoming frightened, he left.

Another teacher, Harry Prentville, a Doctor of Music, was secured from Cincinnati, Ohio. Unable to secure a boarding place on account of teaching Negro boys, he boarded with Langford's father. He was a fine teacher and took great care with young Langford in



composition, and harmony, which were his favorite subjects, and at the age of twenty years, young Langford composed marches and selections which were played by many of the leading bands in the country. Two of his best marches were 'First Regiment K of P' and U.S. Fighting Tenth Calvary'.

He was a member of the First Regiment Knights of Pythias Military Band of Saint Louis and taught music there for more than forty years.

He had successful students among both Negro and White. Here are a few of the names of his successful students:

Harold Baker- with Don Redman and Duke Ellington

Don Pasquale, with Noble Sissle

Eugene Cedric - Television and Radio

R. Q. Dickerson - with Cab Calloway's  
Missourians

Leonard Davis - who before his death was prominent around New York

All of the above named with the exception of Davis are in New York at the present time.

P. B. Langford passed away in December 1930 at the age of seventy-three. Dewey Jackson and Andrew Webb are among the best of his students, at present working in Saint Louis.

This information was received in a letter from Harvey Langford dated September 12, 1936.  
Langford was the father of four sons and three daughters. The youngest son, was very active in the music field, having worked with most of the prominent



leaders, and later band leader himself of the Hi-Hatters. He, Harvey Langford, is now in business and is located in New York.

His son of the late Professor James Henry Harris and Fannie Harris was born in Saint Louis, Missouri on October 23, 1888. At an early age he professed religion and joined the Saint Paul's A.M.E. Church located at 28th and Lawton Avenue. He received his early education in the Public Schools of this city (Saint Louis). He graduated from Hannaker School at the age of twelve, and from Sumner High School at the age of sixteen years. He began the study of violin at an early age under the tutelage of his father and still continued studying after the death of his father, who before his death had placed his pupils in his son's hands.

After completing his education, he toured the east and west coasts of the United States and Canada, with a musical organization before he was called home on account of the illness of his father.

He took the Post Office examination and was appointed clerk in the Saint Paul's office. He kept this position until he saw an opportunity to continue activity in the music field and resigned from the Post Office to

This information was received in a letter from Harvey Langford dated September 12, 1956.

He remained at the Booker Washington Theatre until he received a better offer in the motion pictures



to play during the s APPENDIX VIII He played in most

of the best shows JAMES H. HARRIS II

James Henry Harris, Jr. son of the late Professor James Henry Harris and Fannie Harris, was born in Saint Louis, Missouri on October 23, 1888. At an early age he professed religion and joined the Saint Paul's A.M.E. Church located at 28th and Lawton Avenue. He received his early education in the Public Schools of this city (Saint Louis). He graduated from Banneker School at the age of twelve, and from Sumner High School at the age of sixteen years. He began the study of violin at an early age under the tutorship of his father and still continued studying after the death of his father, who before his death had placed his pupils in his son's hands.

After completing his education, he toured the east and west coasts of the United States and Canada, with a musical organization before being called home on account of the illness of his father.

He took the Post Office examination and was appointed clerk in the Saint Louis office. He kept this position until he saw an opportunity to continue activity in the music field and resigned from the Post Office to accept the leadership of the orchestra at the Booker Washington Vaudeville House.

He remained at the Booker Washington Theatre until he received a better offer in the motion pictures



to play during the silent movies. He played in most of the best show houses in the city.

He organized and instructed a twenty-six piece ladies orchestra for Mrs. Annie M. Malone, then owner of Poro College. The members of the orchestra were all employees of the Poro College. He was very successful with this group and they appeared in New York City, Philadelphia Pennsylvania, Boston, Massachusetts, Washington, D.C. on their first concert tour. Later appearing in Cleveland, Ohio Youngstown, Ohio and Steubenville, Ohio, Kansas City, Kansas, Kansas City, Missouri, Terre Haute, Indiana, Louisville, Kentucky and Chicago, Illinois.

During this time, he kept up his study of the violin and other instruments of both the band and orchestra, and received degree from the Oberkercher School of Music. His musical advisors and coaches were Guido Parisi and the Kunkel Brothers School of Music.

He was called by the Board of Education of East Saint Louis, Illinois, to instruct the different instruments in the schools and was able to give them a good orchestra. He then accepted an offer to teach part time at Sumner High School in Saint Louis.

He helped to organize and instruct the Tom Powell American Legion Post No. 71 Drum and Bugle Corps composed of boys ranging in age from nine years to seventeen



years. This group won much fame in competition throughout the United States and usually won a prize in the various contests entered.

He also was hired by the Board of Education of Madison, Illinois to teach a band at the Dunbar High School and he did a great work for the school and the community. He also instructed the band at the Lovejoy High School in Lovejoy, Illinois.

He was always kept busy with his private pupils and some of them were employed in such bands as Fletcher Henderson, McKinney's Cotton Pickers, Claude Hopkins, Leroy Smith and Earl Hines.

His family was musical. His father was a violinist whom Paderewski praised to the highest. Two sisters were pianists and organists, of his two brothers, one played clarinet and saxophone, and the other played banjo, guitar, flute, piccolo and was an arranger of music. His son plays violin and drums, and he has a daughter who has a talented voice. Also he has a nephew who plays saxophone and clarinet.

He has played with the Great Western Band, under William Flowers, deceased; Blue's Concert Band under Professor William Blue, deceased; and has helped instruct the Shriner's Band of Medinah Temple.

His most beloved instrument is the violin. His



band instrument is the saxophone. He hopes to pass these instruments on to his son, just as his father passed his instruments to him.

He played violin in the choir at the Saint Paul A.M.E. Church for many years. After moving to the western part of the city, he transferred his membership to the Saint James A.M.E. Church and also played with that choir.

He has appeared as violin soloist since the age of fourteen years, and has been presented as soloist at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia and also at Indianapolis, Indiana on programs for the National Association of Negro Musicians, Inc.

He has been active as a member of the Saint Louis Branch of the National Association of Negro Musicians, Inc. serving as Vice President, Member of Advisory Board and Treasurer. He has also been president of Local No. 44 of A.F. of M. for ten successive years, being a delegate to conventions of the A.F. of M. at Denver, Boston. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Local No. 197 also.

This information was taken from the biography of James H. Harris II written by him before his death on June the 6th, 1954.



## APPENDIX IX

## GEORGETTA HARVEY

"No native Saint Louis has had perhaps as much world experience as has Georgetta 'Mickey' Harvey, now of New York. As a girl in high school here, she possessed an unusual deep contralto voice. She eventually went into concert and on the stage - reached old New York. She then went abroad as one of the 'Louisiana Amazon's (Creole Belles). She reached old Russia and sang before Czar's royalty. She remained in Russia for many years, and what years they were. She witnessed the revolution of 1904 and saw the revolters shot down, led by a Priest against the Czar. She was there during the abortive revolution of 1912, and during a part of the world remaking revolution of 1917. It was then that she lost her fortune in rubies and had to flee the country. She found refuge in Japan where she remained for some time. Coming back to New York, Miss Harvey was given a star role in Porgy and Bess. Through the years her magnificent voice help up. In the summer of 1934 she came back to Saint Louis as one of the stars in 'Showboat' at the Municipal Opera in Forest Park. She is now living in New York and carrying on by assisting in developing stage and radio talent. She has traveled a long way from the 'Girl with the golden contralto voice' who graduated from Sumner High School here."

"Georgetta Harvey's rare contralto voice first came to public notice at the Saint Paul A.M.E. Church, Reverend D.P. Roberts, minister. The late John Arthur Freeman, then choir director and tenor soloist, started Miss Harvey on her singing career by organizing a small traveling group which appeared in some of the leading churches in the city and state. Later her talent was further developed under the leadership of Miss Ella Sevier, noted pipe organist and choir director. Whether singing her favorite hymn, 'Come to Jesus', sentimental favorites, 'Because' and 'Just for Today', or rising to her fullest capacity as a soloist or chorus singer in the masterpieces of religious music, people flocked to hear Georgetta Harvey. Her rise to fame as a stage and radio artist was known widely. Her return to the states after over thirteen years abroad (twelve of them in



Revised Edition

Performance  
5 Minutes

Russia) was heralded with successful performances in 'Strut', and 'Miss Lizzie', 'Running Wild', 'Porgy and Bess' (starred in the original version), 'Broadway', 'Five Star Final', 'Mamba's Daughter', 'Anna Lucasta', and in 1949 'Lost in the Stars'

Piano  
or  
Organ

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

The first quote appeared in an article from the publication YOUR SAINT LOUIS AND MINE published in 1937 by N.B. Young, Saint Louis, Missouri

The second quote appeared in the May, 1952 edition of TONE MAGAZINE which is the official journal of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses, Inc. of Chicago, Illinois.



Revised Edition

## Magnificat

(E minor)

Gerald Tyler

Performance  
3 Minutes

Moderato

Piano or Organ

*f marcato*

Soprano

*f*

My soul, my soul doth mag-ni-fy the Lord, and my

Alto

Tenor

*f*

My soul, my soul doth mag-ni-fy the Lord, and my

Bass

*dim.*

spir - it hath re - joic-ed, in God my Saviour.

Alto

*dim.*

spir - it hath re - joic-ed, in God my Saviour.

Bass



For He hath re - gard - ed the

For He hath re - gard - ed the

For He hath re - gard - ed the

*dim.* *p*

This system contains three vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts enter with the lyrics 'For He hath re - gard - ed the'. The piano accompaniment begins with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking and a *p* (piano) dynamic.

low - li - ness, the low - li - ness of his hand maid - en. For be -

low - li - ness, the low - li - ness of his hand maid - en.

low - li - ness, the low - li - ness of his hand maid - en.

This system continues the vocal parts with the lyrics 'low - li - ness, the low - li - ness of his hand maid - en. For be -'. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support.

*mf* hold, from henceforth, hence - forth all gen - e - ra - tions shall call me

This system features the vocal parts with the lyrics 'hold, from henceforth, hence - forth all gen - e - ra - tions shall call me'. The piano accompaniment continues with a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic.



*dim.*  
bless-ed, shall call me blessed.

*f*  
For He that is might-y hath

*p*  
and Ho -

*p*  
mag - ni - fi - ed me, and Ho -

*pp*  
ly is His Name. And His mer - cy is on them, is

*pp*  
ly is His Name. And His mer - cy is on them, is

*pp*  
ly is His Name. And His mer - cy is on them, is

*cresc.*  
*cresc.*  
*cresc.*  
*cresc.*



*dim.* *ff*

on them that fear Him throughout all gen - e - rations. He hath

*dim.* *ff*

on them that fear Him throughout all gen - e - rations. He hath

*dim.* *ff*

on them that fear Him throughout all gen - e - rations. He hath

*dim.* *ff*

on them that fear Him throughout all gen - e - rations. He hath

show - ed strength with His arm, He hath scat - ter - ed the

show - ed strength with His arm, He hath scat - ter - ed the

show - ed strength with His arm, He hath scat - ter - ed the

show - ed strength with His arm, He hath scat - ter - ed the

*rit.*

proud in the im - a - gi - na - tion of their hearts.

*rit.*

proud in the im - a - gi - na - tion of their hearts.

*rit.*

proud in the im - a - gi - na - tion of their hearts.

*rit.*

proud in the im - a - gi - na - tion of their hearts.



*mf*  
He hath put down the might - y from their seat, and

*rit.* *p*  
hath ex - alt - ed the hum - ble and meek. He hath

*rit.*  
fill - ed the hun - gry, the hun - gry with good

*cresc.* *rit.* *din.*  
things and the rich He hath sent empty a -

*rit.* *p.* *cresc.*  
way, sent emp - ty a - way.



He re-mem-bring His mer-cy hath help-en His ser-vant Is-ra-el, as He

He re-mem-bring His mer-cy hath help-en His ser-vant Is-ra-el, as He

He re-mem-bring His mer-cy hath help-en His ser-vant Is-ra-el, as He

promis-ed to our fore-fa-thers, Abraham and his seed for-ev-er. Glo-

promis-ed to our fore-fa-thers, Abraham and his seed for-ev-er. Glo-

promis-ed to our fore-fa-thers, Abraham and his seed for-ev-er. Glo-

ry be to the Fa-ther and to the Son, and to the

ry be to the Fa-ther and to the Son, and to the

ry be to the Fa-ther and to the Son, and to the



Ho - ly Ghost. As it was in the be-gin-ning is now and ev-er

Ho - ly Ghost. As it was in the be-gin-ning is now and ev-er

Ho - ly Ghost. As it was in the be-gin-ning is now and ev-er

The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of chords and single notes, while the left hand plays a steady bass line with some chordal support.

shall be world with-out end, A - men.

shall be ' world with-out end, A - men.

shall be world with-out end, A - men.

The piano accompaniment continues with two staves. The right hand features more complex chordal textures and melodic lines, while the left hand maintains a solid harmonic foundation. Dynamics like *dim.*, *p*, and *rit.* are indicated throughout.



## APPENDIX XI

## JOSEPHINE CURTIS

"Dr. Ruth Harris, director of education and in charge of probationary teachers of Saint Louis Public Schools, has just returned from a week-end trip to South Bend, Indiana where her sister presented the opera 'Carmen' by George Bizet.

The well attended performances were given February 22nd and 23rd in the auditorium of South Bend's Central High School.

The Harry T. Burleigh Music Association, an interracial group of which Mrs. Curtis, a former Saint Louisan is director, formed the nucleus for this production. Instrumental accompaniment included members of the South Bend Symphony Orchestra.

After the first performance, the South Bend Tribune pronounced the production of great excellence.

Since living in South Bend, Mrs. Curtis has engaged in much community activity. 'Carmen' marks her fourteenth opera. (sic) Included in this number are: 'Martha', 'The Bartered Bride', 'Ouango' (premier of this Haitian opera was given), 'The Nightingale', 'Fatunitza', and 'In Gay Havana'. Besides these musical activities, Mrs. Curtis has served as city-wide chairman of the PTA Council, as member of the Mayor's Slum Clearance committee and as part time organist for the Unitarian

In recognition of her many contributions to the South Bend community, the local Y.M.C.A. selected her for their 1951 award, and in November 1955, the National Council of Church Women of America called her to Cleveland, Ohio to receive one of their awards."

The above article entitled "Ex-Saint Louisan directs 'Carmen'" appeared in the March 1, 1957 edition of the Saint Louis Argus, Saint Louis' Negro weekly newspaper.



## APPENDIX XII

## THE SAINT LOUIS MUSIC ASSOCIATION

On April 10, 1921 a group of music lovers met at the home of Mabel O. Story, 4206 W. Belle Place for the purpose of organizing a club for the fellowship of musicians and music lovers. Plans were temporarily laid for the organization of the J. Arthur Freeman Music Club. On April the 17th, the club was permanently established under the direction of Clarence Cameron White, National Organizer of the National Association of Negro Musicians Inc.

The club was named for the late J. Arthur Freeman of Saint Louis. Freeman was considered locally to be one of the foremost Negro lyric tenors and was principal of the Wheatley School of this city.

The club consisted of a membership of eight. Mabel O. Story was selected as a delegate to the National Association of Negro Musicians in July 1921.

The year's work closed with a membership of thirty-six and a treasury of \$50.00 which was contributed to the Marian Anderson Scholarship Fund. Miss Story was again chosen delegate to the National convention.

The first officers of this chapter were:

Mabel O. Story	President
L. Amoreaux	Vice President
Esther McClenney	Secretary
Ruth Hunter	Treasurer



The following officers were elected for the year 1922-23:

Mabel O. Story	President
Grazia Corneal	Vice President
Esther McClenney	Recording Secretary
Laura Nicholson	Corresponding Secretary
Maydell Fossett	Treasurer

History of music was the study program for the ensuing year. The enrollment for that year was forty-one. Delegates to the National Convention were Mabel O. Story, Adelaide Herriot, and Ruth Minor.

Officers for the next year were:

Adelaide Herriot	President
Harriett Robinson	Vice President
Georgianna Dickson	Secretary
Cornelia Haskell	Treasurer

The name of the club was changed from the J. Arthur Freeman to the Saint Louis Music Association. Because of the rapid growth of the body, a broader name was demanded. Two auxiliaries were added during that year; namely, the Saint Louis Choral Club and the Saint Louis Junior Local.

The membership had increased during this year to ninety-four and the entire corps of officers were re-elected. Mrs. Adelaide Herriott, Harriet Robinson, Ruth Minor, Mayday Jones and Mrs. John Purnell were chosen delegates to the National Convention.

In the year 1924-25 the study program was Negro music. The membership was one hundred and fifteen and



the delegates chosen to the National Convention were Grazia, Corneal, Antonio Haskell, Mrs. St. Thompson, Mrs. William Huffman and Mrs. C. D. Moore. One hundred dollars was contributed to the scholarship fund.

The National Association has had two members of the Saint Louis Chapter on its Advisory Board: Mabel O. Story, 1922-24; Adelaide Herriott, 1925.

The preceding information was gathered from the Saint Louis Music Association Year Book 1925-1926 which is in the possession of Edward Hamilton. Observed during interview on April the 4th, 1955.



*Allegro agitato*

35

Flutes I & II

Oboes II

I  
Clarinets  
in Bb  
II

Bassoons

I, II.  
Horns in F  
III, IV.

I  
Trumpets  
in Bb  
II, III.

I, II.  
Trombones  
III  
Tuba

Timpani

35

*Allegro agitato*

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Bass



40

Flutes I. II.

Oboes I. II.

I  
Clarinets  
in B $\flat$   
II

Bassoons

I. II  
Horns in C

III. IV

I  
Trumpets  
in B $\flat$   
II. III.

I. II  
Trombones

III  
Tuba

Timpani

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Bass

40

- 10 -



*molto rit.*

Flutes I. II

Oboes I. II

I  
Clarinets  
in B $\flat$   
III  
Bassoons  
III. II.  
Horns in F  
III. IV.I  
Trumpets  
in B $\flat$   
II. III.I. II.  
Trombones  
III  
Tuba

Timpani

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Bass

The musical score is for page 45 of a larger work. It features a variety of orchestral instruments. The woodwinds (Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons) and brass (Horns, Trumpets, Trombones, Tuba) are mostly playing sustained notes or simple rhythmic patterns. The strings (Violins, Viola, Violoncello, Bass) are playing more active, melodic lines. The Timpani part is also active, providing a rhythmic foundation. The tempo is marked 'molto rit.' (very slow). The score is written on multiple staves, with some parts having dynamic markings like 'sf', 'ff', 'mp', and 'p'. The key signature is one sharp (F#).



*meno mosso e tranquillo*

Flutes

Oboes I & II

Clarinet I in B $\flat$

Clarinet II

Bassoon I

Bassoon II

Horn I & II in C

Horn III & IV

Trumpets

Trombone I & II

Tuba III

Timpani

*meno mosso e tranquillo*

Violin I *Pizz.*

Violin II *Pizz.*

Viola *Pizz.*

Violoncello *Pizz.*

Bass

*a 2 con sordino*



## APPENDIX XIV

## SUMNER HIGH SCHOOL A CAPPELLA CHOIR

"The Sumner A Cappella Choir has the distinction of being the first to be organized in the public schools of Saint Louis. Since its inception ten years ago, the organization under the direction of Wirt Walton has been a pioneer in the field of unaccompanied singing. From the very beginning, public enthusiasm for the group brought about increased demands for engagements, and robes were acquired about the second year.

In addition to appearances on various church and civic programs, the Sumner Choir has been invited to sing before the student assemblies of the high schools of Saint Louis and Saint Louis County. In 1939 it traveled to Kansas City, Kansas and thence to Kansas City, Missouri where it was received with acclaim by the State Teachers Association. More recently, plans for other extended trips have been necessarily cancelled because of transportation difficulties.

During the span of its existence, the choir has aided materially in developing and encouraging a number of talented singers, of whom any school or community might well be proud. To these individuals, the organization has served as a source of inspiration and provided a medium for expression. Outstanding among these are:

Helen Lou Phillips, dramatic soprano, former Sumner Choir soloist; a graduate of Lincoln University where she assisted in the Music Department; studied about one and a half years at Kroeger School of Music and is now majoring in Fine Arts at Fisk University.

Kenneth Billups, baritone, former member of Sumner choral organizations; graduate of Lincoln University; founder and director of Kappa-Delta Choir, Lincoln University; formerly director of National Youth Administration Chorus, Saint Louis, and present director of the 'Legend Singers' - an outgrowth of the former organization which is now disbanded.



Mr. Billups' singers were awarded the supporting role in 'Showboat', Municipal Opera, summer of 1942.

Robert McFerrin, baritone, former Sumner Choir soloist, received an audition by the Ford Sunday Hour radio sponsors while still in school and was favorably considered for a broadcast on that program. He studied a year at Fisk University and later at Chicago Musical College, through the aid of the 'Robert McFerrin Scholarship Fund', sponsored by the Inter-Racial Committee of Saint Louis and raised through a concert by McFerrin and the Sumner Choir. He won first place (1942) for the best male voice in Chicago Tribune's National Contest at Soldier's Field, Chicago in which thirty-eight states were represented.

Curtis Glover, baritone, former Sumner Choir soloist, Guest soloist in several of Saint Louis' churches, was offered a leading role in 'Showboat' at the Municipal Opera, summer of 1942, but declined. A promising singer whose vocal career has been interrupted by the war.

Anita Kirtley, soprano, former Sumner Choir soloist, now studying at Jordan Conservatory of Music, Indianapolis, Indiana. Sang last fall with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, appearing on the same bond rally program with Dorothy Maynor.

Henry Rhetta, baritone, graduate of Hampton Institute and Bradley Polytechnic Institute. Served as soloist in Hampton's famous choir and Trade School Singers. Recently is an instructor of manual arts in Saint Louis Public School System.

Harold Garner, for two years toured the Eastern states and parts of Canada as soloist and member of Michigan University's Men's Glee Club. Recently assistant director to Kenneth Billups, director of National Youth chorus and Legend Singers."

These comments captioned "The History of the Choir" appeared in the program of the A Cappella Choir of Sumner High School in their Concert at Kiel Auditorium (Opera House) Friday, April 2, 1943.



## APPENDIX XV

## PINE STREET Y. CIRCUS

"Through the Years"

Picture the nation in 1934; banks and industries forced to close, people, their savings lost, their jobs gone, were forced to cluster in line seeking mere subsistence. It was then that the word came that there were no funds for Camp River-Cliff - it too must become a casualty.

But, a small group of devout men, members of the Boy's Work Committee, met, reaffirmed the need for a camping program. River Cliff must not close. River Cliff was growing - leadership was developing. They said Camp River Cliff must not close. An idea was born. A Camp Benefit Circus was launched. The Circus that started in the Y Gymnasium in 1920 was to come to life again. No longer a physical education department exhibition, but a 'Y' Circus' --

New -- different -- entertaining, with the purpose of underwriting the cost of Camp River Cliff. So in the Spring of 1935 the now famous trek of the 'Y Circus' through the years began in the 'Y' gym. In 1936 and 1936 the 'Y Circus' was held at the Vashon High School.

In 1936 - Chick Finney and his Saint Louis Crackerjacks became the first 'Y Circus' band.

Then to Kiel Auditorium in 1938 with Jeter-Pillars band, Joe 'Ziggie' Johnson and his Club Plantation Revue.

In 1939, the whole concept of the 'Y Circus' was changed when Louis Armstrong, his orchestra, Sonny Woods, Midge Williams, Mush and Mush, Madeline Greene, Billy and Billy, Bromfield and Greely touched off a flame in the theatrical world that was to light the way for



a quarter million dollar parade of the world's best show talent. Reading like the Blue Book of Show Business, the 'Y Circus' programs have listed these immortals of the entertainment realm:

1940

FATS WALKER, Ted Smith, Pots, Pans and Skillet, Streamline Sue and Pete Nugent;

1941

DUKE ELLINGTON, Ivie Anderson, Austin Wright, Rose 'Cyclone' Morgan, Wingo Sisters and Blott Brothers;

1942

JIMMIE LUNCEFORD, Dusty 'Open the Door Richard' Fletcher;

1943

LIONEL HAMPTON, George Hudson's Band, Dinah Washington, Joe Williams, Miller Brothers and Lois;

1944

CAB CALLOWAY, Chocalateers, Dolly Saulters, Three Loose Nuts;

1945

COUNT BASIE, Jimmy Rushing, Pops and Louis, Billy and Evelyn Nightingale, The Zephyrs, Earl Warren. This is the year the 'Y Circus' became a week's attraction;

1946

COOTIE WILLIAMS, The Ink Spots, Ella Fitzgerald, Dorothy Donegan, Shaw's Circus Band, and Pork and Beans;

1947

EARL 'FATHA' HINES, KING COLE TRIO, Son and Sonny and Stump and Stumpy;

1948

ERSKINE HAWKINS Nicholas Brothers, Nellie Lutcher, Sarah Vaughn, Buggs Robert's Band, Larry Steele, Hortense Allen and George Kirby;



1949

LUCKY MILLENDER, The Ravens, Dinah Washington  
Janet Sayre, Four Step Brothers, Patterson  
and Jackson;

1950

BUDDY JOHNSON, Savannah Churchill, Arthur  
Prysock, Maurice Rocco, Ella Johnson, Peg  
Leg Bates, James Smith, Congaroo Dancers,  
Timmie Rogers and Jewell Belle;

1951

LOUIS JORDAN, Peggy Thomas, Coco, Steve and  
Eddie, Bob and Earl, Bill Davis, Teddy Hale  
and Johnny Hartman."

This information was in a souvenir program of the  
eighteenth Annual Y Circus, April 2nd until 26th,  
1951.



## APPENDIX XVI

THE TOM POWELL AMERICAN LEGION POST DRUM  
AND BUGLE CORPS

The Tom Powell Drum and Bugle Corps was organized in 1935 by Fred Holloway, Louis C. Floyd and Robert N. Owens. The purpose was to help curb juvenile delinquency in and around the neighborhood of the Post's headquarters, and to provide music for post members to march by at the American Legion parade in Saint Louis that year.

No one dreamed this group of small boys in duck pants and sailor caps would reach such prominence in the years to follow.

Under the capable guidance of James H. Harris and Otto Williams they developed into a well-disciplined and well-drilled organization. In 1936 the group attended its first state convention in Springfield, Missouri as a parade unit. In 1937 the Junior Corps became 'Sons of the American Legion Corps'. As a S.A.L. Corps, they set a splendid record taking part in all state contests and never placing below fourth.

In 1939 was the banner year. In that year the group entered contests for the first time in new tailor made uniforms of brown and gold. In the new uniforms their impeccable appearances and performances were so applauded that the judges awarded them their first championship. It was the first time a Negro corps had won a state championship.



In September the corps was sent to the National Convention in Chicago where they placed seventh.

In 1941 the group disbanded because most of the members entered military service. The thought in every man's mind was the hope that a bigger and better corps could be organized if and when they returned.

Their reputation was upheld during their absense by a girl's drum and bugle corps organized in 1941 and serving until 1945.

In 1946 the veterans returned home and a senior corps was organized with about seventy-five percent of the original personnel. Only one member was killed in service.

After much hard work and perseverance, the newly organized group won its first Senior Championship in Kansas City in 1946. In 1946 in Saint Louis, they placed second and in 1948 in Kansas City, the championship was won again.

In 1949 the corps attended its first National Convention in Philadelphia as a Senior Corps. They were three corps from placing in the finals but had the distinction of leading the Missouri delegation in the parade. It was a little disheartening in Kansas City in 1950 to lose the championship by a mere .1 of a point to the famed Golden Troopers from Cape Girardeau, Missouri



When the contest season opened in 1952, the corps had enlarged and taken on new life. The State Championship was again captured and has been held for 1953, 1954, and 1955. The forty-ninth State Drum Corps Association Senior Championship has been held for the same period.

The corps attended the National Convention in New York in 1952; Saint Louis in 1953; Washington D.C. in 1954 and each time were points from placing in the finals.

In an effort to please the public and acquire G.E. (general efficiency), the group in 1954 after six months of corresponding, were sent photostats of the original coronation fanfares from England with permission granted to play them by that country and A.S.C.A.P. of this country. In 1954, the corps played a concert medley of Duke Ellington numbers and called it 'A Salute to the Duke'.

The corps is proud of its members who are now playing with some of the nations top bands - Clark Terry, now with Duke Ellington; Arvell Shaw, who has been with Louis Armstrong; and others.

The year 1956 finds the corps with thirty-three to thirty-six horns for competition, nine man drum line and ten man color guard. The group travels with a compliment of sixty on two chartered thirty-three passenger



air-conditioned buses.

All funds raised by parades, contests and donations, as the corps does not receive any funds from its post, but is a self-sustaining unit.

Plans were made to attend the National Convention in Los Angeles in September of 1956. The trip was made and this corps was the only Negro group present. To show appreciation of this trip, the corps had the distinction of being the first Negro corps to place in the top ten during the contest. They placed seventh out of twenty-nine corps."

The students praise Miss Green:

"She is a wonderful teacher, and she makes it easy for us to learn to sing. Most of us can't read music, but the way she teaches we can learn any song."

Another student said:

"She is more like a coach than a teacher."

Miss Green directs her group with vigorous and emphatic gestures, moving among the students occasionally and singing a number as she wants it sung."

The preceding information was obtained from Vincent Saunders, leader of the group, used as a publicity release and used for public relations for the Tom Powell Corps.



## APPENDIX XVII

## VASHON HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR

"The Vashon High School Choir, long famed as one of the areas finest choruses, is a group that serves a multiple purpose.

For years it has been providing audiences with wonderful, moving music, and giving its one hundred and twenty-seven singers a real source of present enjoyment and future culture.

But this music is also Vashon's biggest contribution to the Saint Louis Public School Human Relations Program - a project to aid in 'getting along with the rest of the community'.

Each year it fills some thirty-six singing engagements including broadcasts, church and school concerts, music festivals and such.

The students say of Miss Green:

'She is a wonderful teacher, and she makes it easy for us to learn to sing. Most of us can't read music, but the way she teaches we can learn any song.'

Another student said:

'She is more like a comrade than a teacher.'

Miss Green directs her group with vigorous and emphatic gestures, moving among the students occasionally and singing a number as she wants it sung."

This article appeared in the December 12, 1951 edition of the Saint Louis Globe-Democrat.



## APPENDIX XVIII

## HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN NEGRO MUSIC FESTIVAL

"In 1940, while our country was as yet at war, W. Louis Davis conceived the idea of the American Negro Music Festival. He envisioned a cultural program of interracial goodwill which present to the masses the finest artists at a price within the reach of everyone. He wanted the net revenue from such a presentation to swell the coffers of recognized charities and War Relief Agencies. And so the Festival was born. In four years it has increased in magnitude until now it is of national importance. The first chairman of its sponsors' committee was Mrs. Marva Louis (Barrow) who is now honorary chairman.

The first festival was held in Soldier's Field, Chicago on August 25, 1940. Such stars as Roland Hayes, international famous tenor, Anne Brown and Todd Duncan stars of 'Porgy and Bess', Louise Burge, contralto from Washington, D.C., 'The Southernaires', Sunday morning feature over the National Broadcasting Network. 'Wings Over Jordan', Sunday morning feature over Columbia Broadcasting System, a 1,000 voice choir under the direction of Professor J. Wesley Jones, and other features of equal importance were presented.

Artistically, the first festival was a success. Financially, although creditable sums were turned over to the American Red Cross, the response was not as large as such a project merited. Yet, this was to be the most successful one for two years to come.

Rain was the unwelcome guest at the 1941 and 1942 festivals. Despite a fine array of international known artists, musicians and choral groups, inclement weather which set in early and stayed late, reduced attendance at these festivals to a small number.

The second festival was held in Soldier's Field on August 24, 1941. Roland Hayes appeared for the second time, as did the 'Southernaires'. La Julia Rhea, famous Chicago opera star, Ethel Wise, dramatic soprano, Eddie South, popularly



known as 'The Dark Angel of the Violin', Canada Lee, famous star of 'Native Son', movie actor Bobby Brooks, who sang in the picture 'The Great Lie', and twelve year old child prodigy, concert pianist Natalie Henderson, many times soloist with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, made the program a notable one. This time the United Service Organizations were the chosen beneficiaries to the net proceeds.

July 12, 1942, the third festival was held in Soldier's Field. Young Murial Rahn, concert soprano and stage star of New York City, was the featured soloist. Eddie South and Canada Lee made their second appearance on a festival program. The National Negro Opera Chorus, a forty piece Navy band from Chicago and three hundred Navy men from Camp Robert Smalls, Frankie Fambro, dramatic soprano, shared the festival stage. John B. Kennedy, nationally known commentator of New York, served as master of ceremonies. The Chicago Service Men's Centers were the chosen beneficiaries to the net proceeds.

1943 found a war tense nation in the need of music for relaxation, inspiration and enjoyment. The site of the festival had been changed to a park more ideally located as far as transportation was concerned. On July 24, an interracial audience of 40,000 people waited impatiently beneath the star-studded bowl of the heavens in vast White Sox Ball Park for the opening strains of the Overture played by the U.S. Navy Band from Camp Robert Smalls, the 1,000 voice choir of the first festival now augmented to 3,000 sang under the joint direction of Professor J. Wesley Jones and Professor Thomas A. Dorsey. The program starred Paul Robeson, internationally famous star of concert stage, radio and motion pictures, Dorothy Donegan, 'Queen of the Boogie-Woogie Pianists', Una Mae Carlisle, internationally famous pianist and composer, Sgt. Joe Louis Barrow, heavyweight boxing champion of the world, Geraldine Overstreet, lyric soprano star of the 'Mikado of Swing', with Jack Brickhouse as the announcer, and was broadcast on a Mutual coast to coast hookup and short waved to our forces overseas.



The Army and Navy Relief Fund received the net proceeds and in addition more than 500,000 cigarettes were sent to fighting men overseas, irrespective of race, creed or color.

Last year's success more than repaid for the disappointments attendant on the past two previous years. From this inspiration sponsors of the festival found new incentive to make the American Negro Festival a national institution. Toward this end new plans were made.

This year, 1944, sees the festival an actuality in three of the largest cities in the middle west. Chicago, Saint Louis and Detroit will be hosts to more than 100,000 eager music lovers. The Army and Navy Relief Fund will again be the beneficiary of the presentation.

The highlight of this year's festival is the Search for Talent contest sponsored in six states by local Negro newspapers. Illinois, Chicago Defender; Michigan, Michigan Chronicle; Ohio, Cincinnati Call Post; Indiana, Indianapolis; Missouri, Saint Louis Argus; and Kentucky, Louisville Defender. The winner of the contest which is limited to amateur singers, will be presented to the huge festival audience in addition to receiving a cash award.

This year's Music Festival, coming during the bloody invasion months of the fight against oppression and tyranny, has already been approved by officials of all United Nations who have already seen its power to bring the human family closer together for peace and goodwill not blood shed.

This year's festival will be short waved to the armed forces of the United Nations as a concrete example of democracy in action. It will not only be heard by our armed forces, but will be monitored by the minions of Hitler and Tojo will hear American Negro performers quietly refuting the nonsense of their 'super race' theory and giving a demonstration of strength



and unity which can be achieved in communities where all races work together towards a common goal - freedom for all."

INDIVIDUAL

MENT IN THE

TOWARDS THE

MUSIC FESTIVAL

1. Newspapers and radio stations of the St. Louis area

2. Ministers and church groups

3. The Urban League, Youth Council, and the Y.M.C.A.

4. The Negro College Fund, the St. Louis Negro College

5. The Negro Chamber of Commerce, the St. Louis Negro Chamber of Commerce

6. The Negro Club

7. U.S. Coast Guard Band

8. George H. Ragsdale and Orchestra

9. Commanding Officers of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force

10. Coast Guard

11. Metropolitan Police Department and St. Louis Police Department

12. Summary

13. Cardinals and Bishops of the Archdiocese of St. Louis

14. Festival Stars of 1944

15. Members of the Festival Staff

16. The history titled 'MUSIC FESTIVAL HALL OF FAME' appeared in booklet 'HARMONY' published by the 5th Annual American Negro Music Festival for the festival held in July 1944 at Sportsman Park in Saint Louis, Missouri. Harold W. Ross, Publisher.

Mrs. Alice M. Jacobs

Mrs. Elbert J. J. J.

Mrs. Augusta Carter

Mrs. Mable B. Robinson

Mrs. Sarah Hope

Mrs. Marie Dean

Mr. Lawrence R. J. J.

Mr. Clarence Hayden

Mr. J. J. J.

Mr. Oscar Washington

St. Louis, Mo.

Mrs. Safay Washington



## APPENDIX XIX

INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO RECEIVED ACKNOWLEDGE-  
MENT IN THE PUBLICATION 'HARMONY' FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE  
TOWARDS THE PRESENTING OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL AMERICAN NEGRO  
MUSIC FESTIVAL

1. Newspapers and radio stations of the Greater Saint Louis Area.
2. Ministers and church choirs.
3. The Urban League Block Units and their chairmen, Beatrice Hurt, Annie Harris and Elizabeth Hunter.
4. The Moshonia Club
5. U.S. Coast Guard Band
6. George Hudson and Orchestra
7. Commanding Officers of the Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard
8. Metropolitan Police Department and Public Service Company
9. Cardinals and Browns Management (Baseball Clubs)
10. Festival Stars of 1944
11. Members of the Festival Staff
12. The Festival Advertisers and Patrons
13. Members of the Massed Choir and the Assistant Directors:

Choral Assistants

Miss Alberta Owens  
Mrs. Ethel Day  
Mrs. Audress Carter  
Mrs. Malta B. Robinson  
Mrs. Sarah Hope  
Mrs. Mamie Dean

Mr. Lawrence Pierre  
Mr. Clarence Hayden  
Wilson  
Mr. Booker Washington  
(E.St. Louis Unit)  
Miss Daisey Westbrooks



Mrs. Grazia C. Barnes  
 Mrs. Annette Watkins  
 Mrs. R. L. Witherspoon  
 Mrs. J. Roy Terry

Mrs. Amanda Hamilton  
 Mrs. Walter Ellsford  
 Mrs. Lolita Abernathy



## APPENDIX XX

"LEGEND SINGERS DRAW OVATION FROM AUDIENCE"

The Legend Singers, with a history of more than fifteen years performing in Saint Louis and on a national scale, presented a program of 'Great Music' at the Sumner High School Auditorium last Sunday.

A large and enthusiastic audience of friends, music lovers and well wishers through the years were on hand to applaud the talented singers. It was a highly enjoyable program for all tastes.

Kenneth Billups and Charles Gladney, as associate conductor, kept their forces under control at all times. The group was well balanced and trained to a fine point in the fundamentals of choral production and performance. Do not miss an opportunity to hear them in their next concert.

The first half of the program was a lesson in performing the splendid and taxing choruses from such oratorios as the 'Messiah' by Handel, 'The Creation' by Haydn, 'The Mount of Olives', by Beethoven, 'The Crucifixion' by Stainer, and the 'Stabat Mater', by Rossini. All the choruses of the city should have heard these renditions.

Helen Fields, with a lovely, light-floating quality voice, was effective in the obligato of the 'Inflammatus'.

'God's Trombones', as arranged by Roy Ringwayy, will remain in the minds of the audience for a long time. It was very effectively done with well integrated lighting and sound effects. Nettie Johnson Gerdine, speech specialist at Sumner, took the part of the 'Prayer Leader', while Jessee Shanklin read the lines of the preacher. The performance was reminiscent of the religious fervor displayed in such stage plays as the 'Green Pastures'.

Mildred Bailey, organist, played a group of organ solos that showed her to be a talented and discriminating performer at the console organ, and



## APPENDIX XXI

one of the best accompanists heard in these parts. She also supplied adequate organ accompaniment for the choir along with John Woodson at the harpsichord and piano by turns.

The concert was under the auspices of the Saint Louis Music Association, a branch of the National Association of Negro Musicians, Incorporated.

New York, January 29, 1958

Tomorrow night when the curtains go up at New York's Metropolitan Opera, a young Negro baritone, Robert McFerrin, will step from near obscurity to celebrity status.

Almost unknown to the general public but already hailed by many critics as one of the greatest American voices of our time, the thirty-three-year-old McFerrin has dropped of singing at the Metropolitan since his student days at Sumner High School in Saint Louis. Tomorrow night he will realize that dream when he makes his debut in the role of Amleto in Verdi's "Aida".

The art, however, says just a little, anxious, McFerrin said as he talked of his debut in the living room of the apartment flat where he lives with his wife and two children on New York's quiet Lower East Side. "My debut will be a big night for all of us and just to make the night perfect my twenty-year-old mother and my brother James will be here from Saint Louis. My mother is taking her first plane ride just in time for this."

McFerrin's dramatic step from the ranks of little-known singer to regular member of the Metropolitan Opera Company is one of the climaxes which legends are woven. Winner of many scholarships and many contests and praised by the critics for magnificent performances with the New England and Italian Negro Opera Companies, McFerrin

The above article appeared in the April 5th, 1957 edition of the Saint Louis Argus, weekly Negro newspaper.

Singing an amazing sequence of the most thrilling baritone arias in the repertoire, he was pro-



## APPENDIX XXI

ROBERT McFERRIN

"FROM SUMNER HIGH TO DEBUT AT 'MET'"

Former Saint Louisan Robert McFerrin will appear in 'Aida' tomorrow night; Second Negro to sing with famed Opera Company; Mother to hear him.

New York, January 26, 1955

Tomorrow night when the curtain goes up at New York's Metropolitan Opera, a young Negro baritone, Robert McFerrin, will step from near obscurity to celebrity status.

Almost unknown to the general public but already hailed by many critics as one of the greatest American voices of our time, the thirty-three year old McFerrin has dreamed of singing at the Metropolitan since his student days at Sumner High School in Saint Louis. Tomorrow night he will realize that dream when he makes his debut in the role of Amonasro in Verdi's 'Aida'.

"I'm not nervous, maybe just a little anxious," McFerrin said as we talked of his debut in the living room of the tenement flat where he lives with his wife and two children on New York's squalid Lower East Side. "My debut will be a big night for all of us and just to make the night perfect my seventy year old mother and my brother James will be here from Saint Louis. My mother is taking her first plane ride just to hear me sing."

McFerrin's dramatic step from the ranks of little known singer to regular member of the Metropolitan Opera Company is of the cloth from which legends are woven. Winner of many scholarships and many contests and praised by the critics for magnificent performances with the New England and National Negro Opera Companies, McFerrin received no commercial encouragement and little public recognition. Then in the Spring of 1953 he entered the Metropolitan Auditions of the Air. Singing an amazing sequence of the most taxing baritone arias in the repertoire, he was pro-



claimed a winner by unanimous vote of the judges, was given a scholarship at the Kathryn Turney Long Opera Courses, six weeks of voice training usually reserved for 'Met' singers under contract, and thus made American musical history by becoming the first Negro singer to be trained at the Metropolitan.

Only the second Negro who will have sung with the Metropolitan in its seventy year history, McFerrin will make his debut there just three weeks after that of famous contralto Marian Anderson, who sang a leading role in 'Un Ballo in Maschera.'

Born in Marianna, Arkansas one of the eight children of a Baptist minister, McFerrin moved with his family to Saint Louis, where his father, the late Reverend Melvin McFerrin, later became pastor of the Kingshighway Baptist Church. Robert, his heart set on becoming an English teacher; entered Sumner High School. A few weeks after school started, Sumner's music teacher, Wirt Walton, discovered Robert's amazing voice.

Singing had always been a pastime of the McFerrin family but Robert had never given a thought of taking it up professionally. However Walton, who pioneered in organizing a cappella choir singing in the Saint Louis school system, urged Robert to make the most of his phenomenal voice.

'He not only was my music teacher but my benefactor,' McFerrin says of his old teacher who is now at Harris Teachers College. 'He spent innumerable hours with me giving me the training I needed.'

When Robert had finished high school, Walton and others who had also become interested in the young singer's voice, organized an inter-racial committee to raise funds to enable Robert to continue his education. He spent one year at Fisk University at Nashville, Tennessee and then started his vocal studies in earnest at the Chicago College of Music. While in Chicago he won the Chicago Musicland Competition and appeared as soloist at Chicago's summer Grant Park series.



In 1942, he entered the Army, spent seven months in England with an engineer outfit and then was transferred into one special services section of the Air Force and served in Manila and Japan until February of 1946, when he returned to the Chicago College of Music for more study.

Back home in Saint Louis for a year when his Chicago scholarship expired, Robert sang at Temple Israel and worked as a car hop in a hamburger drive-in. Then he came to New York, where he was brought to the attention of Boris Goldovsky, who promptly offered him a scholarship in the Opera Department of famed Tanglewood. McFerrin sang leads in Gluck's 'Iphigenia in Tauris' and in 'Rigoletto' and Goldovsky had him repeat both roles professionally with the New England Opera Company.

Next McFerrin appeared on Broadway in the revival of 'The Green Pastures' and was in the chorus of Kurt Weill's 'Lost in the Stars'.

After the road tour of 'Lost in the Stars', McFerrin spent a year in concert work and appearing in various operatic roles in Washington with the National Opera Company.

Although so eminent an authority as Eugene Ormandy has said that McFerrin is 'as great as any baritone before the public today', Robert had some lean times in New York and it was during one of the leanest that he met and married Sara Copper, herself a singer and his colleague at Saint Mark's Methodist Church in New York where both were soloists. Miss Copper, a graduate of Howard University, was bent on furthering her own singing career but gave up the idea to help her husband with his.

'She has fed this family for the past six years,' McFerrin said, and he told how his wife worked for the Veterans Administration in Washington and still works in New York as a receptionist and switchboard operator for the Department of Agriculture. 'Sara has kept our family together and when I am up there on the stage at the Metropolitan singing tomorrow night, it won't



just be me.. There will be two of us doing it. She is my home accompanist and her hand is in everything I sing.'

After Robert won the Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air in 1953, he put in a year of study under Ignace Zitomirsky, whose pupils have included such famed singers as Lawrence Tibbett, Gladys Swarthout and James Melton. McFerrin gives Zitomirsky great credit for the strides he made under his tutelage.

After the auditions, McFerrin thought his actual 'Met' debut would be at least four years off. He worked hard at the Metropolitan's Kathryn Long School, put in a season of nationwide concerts and orchestral appearances, and then came the magnificent surprise. He was asked to sign a contract as a regular member of the Metropolitan Opera Company.

'When I signed that contract I just laughed, and laughed, I was so happy', McFerrin said. 'I had a wonderful time signing those three copies. First I'd sign one and I'd laugh and then Mr. (Rudolph) Bing would sign one and I'd laugh some more. That night going home on the bus with that signed contract in my pocket, all I could think of was that I must not get run over by a car before I could show that contract to Sara.'

That same night, Robert called his old teacher, Wirt Walton, to impart the good news.

'The Met was to make the official announcement but I knew my friend would keep the secret,' McFerrin says. 'I wanted to call my mother, too, but I knew it would be too much for her to keep to herself. She'd have to tell all my sisters in Saint Louis.'

Audiences are sometimes surprised when McFerrin who stands only five feet and six inches and weighs only one hundred and thirty-two pounds, walks out on the stage. Accustomed to the mountainous Robeson, the muscular Tibbett, the heavy set Warfield and the chunky Leonard Warren, McFerrin seems light in comparison.



In opera, critics say that McFerrin's bel canto singing 'recalls and revives the tradition of the Golden Age.' "

"THE MENIAL JOBS WEREN'T SACRIFICES  
Saint Louis Soprano Helen Phillips Considers  
Them Just Steps in Career

Helen Phillips, the young Saint Louis negro soprano who will be presented by the Saint Louis Fisk Club at Kiel Auditorium tomorrow night, has no patience with artists who talk about the sacrifices they make for their careers.

In her own short career, during which critics have suggested that she may soon join the ranks of such singers as Marian Anderson and Todd Duncan, Helen has held such menial jobs as factory worker, elevator operator and dishwasher.

'These jobs weren't sacrifices,' she laughs. 'They were pure joy because I knew that each one was just another stepping stone that brought in a little money to enable me to continue my studies.'

Helen's concert at Kiel Auditorium will mark her second appearance in Saint Louis since she made her successful debut at New York's Town Hall little more than two years ago. In July 1948 she appeared in Saint Louis as guest soloist with the Little Symphony.

'I feel that I always sing better in Saint Louis,' Helen says. 'I guess I'm just a small town girl. I just can't seem to relax before a New York audience.'

But whatever misgivings about New York appearances since her Town Hall debut, the critics have been more than enthusiastic. The New York Times critic recently observed:

The preceding article was written by Vivian Irwin, a staff correspondent of the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch and appeared in the January 26th, 1955 edition of the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch.



## APPENDIX XXII

## HELEN PHILLIPS

## "THE MENIAL JOBS WEREN'T SACRIFICES

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But whatever misgivings about New York appearances since her Town Hall debut, the critics have been more than enthusiastic. The New York Times critic recently observed:

'Her voice is pure and consistent throughout, being warm and rich in the lower registers, and sweet and pure at the top.'



Born in Saint Louis, the daughter of Mrs. Julia Phillips and the late Reverend James Phillips, an Edwardsville, Illinois Baptist minister, Helen grew up in the family home at 4351 Cottage Avenue in north Saint Louis, attended Simmons Elementary School and Sumner High School. It was at Sumner that her extraordinary voice first came to notice. Her first recital was given during her senior year, at the Berea Presbyterian Church, and with \$26.00 collected by her sorority she was sent off to Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri.

At Lincoln University, Helen took a Bachelors Degree in Elementary Education, became the school's leading soprano and taught in the experimental high school. In 1940 she returned to Saint Louis and taught in a nursery school under the WPA and in 1941, with the encouragement of the Saint Louis teacher Louise Kroeger, who had been giving Helen music lessons free, she began to think seriously of the concert stage.

'It was then that I went into the theoretical side of music,' Helen says. 'It was Louise Kroeger who made me understand that learning by rote was not enough. I went into theory, harmony and voice training and it was not long before a group of Saint Louis music lovers came to my aid. They helped me to go to Fisk University and with a far-sightedness insisted that I study something besides music, in case I someday had to earn my living some way besides singing.'

At Fisk, Helen did graduate work in sociology as well as music and was for two years leading soprano with the Fisk Choir, during which time she traveled throughout the country. However, with the beginning of the war, she had to return to Saint Louis. Her two brothers, Thomas and James Phillips were called to service and her help was needed at home. She took a job at the Saint Louis Small Arms Ammunition Plant, gauging bullets, and later went to work at Homer Phillips Hospital as social investigator.



In February 1945, her original sponsors in the group of Saint Louis music lovers, along with a Negro business men's organization, raised money and established a trust fund for Helen to enable her to go to New York for further training. With letters to New Yorkers, Helen soon made valuable acquaintances. Within the month she was invited to sing in the choir of Saint George's Episcopal Church and later became soloist. She was the second Negro to hold the soloist spot. It was hers for the next three years.

In those three years, Helen worked as a stenographer for the National Episcopal Council and then through financial aid of her Saint Louis friends was enabled to give up this job to use her full time to getting ready for her debut. She had been following a strenuous schedule, holding down a working job and studying voice technique, languages, diction, and interpretation and had been taken into the home of Paul Breisach, a conductor at the Metropolitan, because of her great interest in German lieder.

'It was wonderful,' Helen says. 'I was like one of the family. We spoke only German. In no other way could I have absorbed the feeling for the language.'

While pursuing the intensive course of study prior to her debut, Helen went to live at the Margaret Louisa Y.W.C.A. She was the first Negro to be admitted to residency in the institution and as a member of the cooperative 'household' she did her share of the chores such as running the elevator, washing dishes and making beds.

And then in March 1948, Helen was ready for her debut at Town Hall.

'I was scared to death,' she recalls. 'I just knew I couldn't relax. But somehow I did. The recital was in the middle of the week when it is difficult to get the public out, to say nothing of the critics. But both were there in satisfying numbers. The next day I could hardly believe the reviews.'



Now Helen is ready to undertake a concert tour. Her years of study, while not at an end, at last begun to pay off.

'I could tell,' she says modestly, 'about being the first Negro to win the Artist's Presentation Scholarship of the Wednesday Club in Saint Louis, about being invited to sing the Lord's Prayer at the National Red Cross Convention, about my 'uptown' recital at Saint Mark's Church, but all these seem such little accomplishments that I am afraid it would seem like boasting, even though they mean so much to me.'

Not yet thirty years old and unmarried, she lives on the top floor of an old tenement in New York, does her own cooking and dreams of the day when she may be admitted to the ranks of great American singers.

'That dream', she says, 'is for my mother, who worked hard to raise me. My mother had a gorgeous mezzo voice and I'm sure that secretly she had dreams of a career of her own in her young days. But the quiet stoic woman that she is, she never said so. Maybe some day I can make her see the dreams she must have had realized in me.'

Since it included Verdi's 'Face, Face, Mio Dio' (lieder by Mahler and Negro spirituals, Miss Phillips' program called for a considerable range of style and interpretation. No doubt she will develop into a more finished artist, but she already has nearly all the rudiments. She showed good imagination and taste, and an appreciation of differing musical styles.

The Mahler songs were especially fresh and winning. She sang them with refinement and gentle feeling. In the Verdi aria and in the second aria she showed an entire, 'Viva le opere' from Massenet's 'Mirella'.

The preceding article was written by Vivian Irwin, a staff correspondent of the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch and appeared in the November 2nd, 1950 edition of the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch.

Irwin, Remy and Remy, and also approached in its own style. Her collection in English included



## APPENDIX XXIII

## HELEN PHILLIPS - TOWN HALL CONCERT

## "HELEN PHILLIPS GIVES FIRST LOCAL RECITAL

Helen Phillips talented young Negro soprano from Saint Louis gave her first New York recital yesterday at Town Hall. She evoked warm enthusiasm from her audience, and it was well deserved, for she is a skillful and sympathetic singer with a particularly fine natural voice.

The voice is pure and consistent throughout being warm and rich in the lower registers and sweet and true at the top. It is good too, at almost any dynamic level, for she can manage very pleasing soft tones as well as ample, full notes for ringing climaxes.

She was nervous when she began with Handel's 'Comer Ever Smiling Liberty', but her voice soon warmed up and from then on there wasn't an inaccurate, unpleasant sound all afternoon, although there were one or two occasions of slight overstress.

Since it included Verdi's 'Pace, Pace, Mio Dio', lieder by Mahler and Negro spirituals, Miss Phillips' program called for a considerable range of style and interpretation. No doubt she will develop into a more finished artist, but she already has nearly all the rudiments. She showed both imagination and taste, and an appreciation of differing musical styles.

The Mahler songs were especially fresh and winning. She sang them with refinement and gentle feeling. In the Verdi aria and in the second aria she added an encore, 'Vio lo sapete' from Mascagni's 'Cavalleria Rusticana' and she showed she could also compass the intensity of opera.

A French group, with songs by Widor, Rabey and Faure, was also approached in its own style. Her selections in English included



Granados' 'The Maja and the Nightingale',  
 Griffes' 'By a Lonely Forest Pathway' and  
 George Kemmer's 'Balm in Gilead'. H.  
 Spencer McEvoy was her accomplished and  
 helpful accompanist.

Miss Phillips, who attracted world wide fame when she  
 slapped the face of a Russian soldier on a  
 train in the Soviet zone in Austria in 1952,  
 will be one of the four soloists with the  
 Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra tomorrow and  
 Sunday in Kiel Auditorium Opera House.

Miss Phillips, a Negro who will sing the  
 soprano lead in performances of Beethoven's  
 Ninth Symphony explained that she was on a  
 concert tour sponsored by the State Department  
 in April of 1952, traveling on the Oriental  
 Express to Salzburg, when the incident occurred.

'My Accompanist, Richard Chamberlain,  
 and I were in our compartment when two  
 Russian soldiers passed,' she said.  
 'Noticing that we were Negroes, they  
 entered and started deriding the United  
 States and talking about the plight of  
 the Negroes in this country. During the  
 course of the conversation, one took my  
 glasses and refused to give them back.  
 Then he tried to get fresh and I slapped  
 him good and hard. He was immediately  
 escorted out by a Soviet officer.'

Miss Phillips said she had gone to Europe for  
 a series of concerts for three months, but  
 stayed two years at the request of the State  
 Department. 'I sang in many provincial towns  
 where people had never seen an American, and they  
 remembered Negroes only from movies,' she said.

The preceding article appeared in the New York  
 Times and was used by her management (Henry Colbert  
 15th West 44th Street, New York) for release purposes.

'I have released this for European  
 tour because it would be a form of  
 escape, and I want to prove I can succeed  
 in my own country.'

The above article appeared in the March 11th, 1955 edition  
 of the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch.



## APPENDIX XXIV

## HELEN PHILLIPS

"Saint Louis born soprano Helen Phillips, who attracted world wide fame when she slapped the face of a Russian soldier on a train in the Soviet zone in Austria in 1952, will be one of the four soloists with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra tomorrow and Sunday in Kiel Auditorium Opera House.

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'My Accompanist, Richard Chamberlain, and I were in our compartment when two Russian soldiers passed,' she said. 'Noticing that we were Negroes, they entered and started deriding the United States and talking about the plight of the Negroes in this country. During the course of the conversation, one took my glasses and refused to give them back. Then he tried to get fresh and I slapped him good and hard. He was immediately escorted out by a Soviet officer.'

Miss Phillips said she had gone to Europe for a series of concerts for three months, but stayed two years at the request of the State Department. 'I sang in many provincial towns where people had never seen an American, and they remembered Negroes only from movies,' she said.

'What I want now is the chance in America for the sort of musical success I received in Europe,' Miss Phillips said. 'I have refused another European tour because it would be a form of escape, and I want to prove I can succeed in my own country.' "

The above article appeared in the March 11th, 1955 edition of the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch.



## APPENDIX XXV

## GRACE BUMBRY

Comments from appearance on Arthur Godfrey's Talent  
Scouts Radio and Television Show May the 17th, 1954:

"Arthur Godfrey, moved to tears, commented  
on the performance:

'Boy, its been a long time since a  
kid on Talent Scouts did this to  
me. I'm going to take her out of  
competition right now. I've got  
something special for her.'

Among other comments on this performance was  
the one that appeared in the June 27, 1954 edition of  
the Saint Louis Globe Democrat:

"For a seventeen year old girl to make  
a ripple in the New York singing world  
on her first venture into the 'big time'  
would be considered a fantastic long  
show by professional odds makers. But  
Grace Bumbry of Saint Louis not only made  
a riple, she made a splash and a big one."

The above articles appeared in reviews of performances  
and appeared in the June 27, 1954 edition of the Saint  
Louis Globe Democrat.



## APPENDIX XXVI

GEORGE VAN HOY COLLINS  
AND THE HADLEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR

## HADLEY TECH CHOIR SINGS IN CHICAGO

The Hadley Technical High School sang at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Chicago, Illinois, on May 24, at 8:00 PM. The choir was presented in a concert under the auspices of the Chicago Chapter of the Hampton Institute Alumni Association and the Fellowship Circle of the Church of the Good Shepherd.

While in Chicago, the choir sang at the Dunbar Technical High School and the Wendell Phillips High School. The group was warmly received at all concerts, and was highly commended on its excellent singing and good behavior. A tour of the city included a trip to the publishing plant of the Chicago Defender. After the Thursday night program at the Church of the Good Shepherd the choir attended a reception given in its honor at the Tuskegee Club by the Hampton Alumni Association.

Among the invitations received while in Chicago was one to sing at a mass meeting where the following people participated: Harry Belafonte, Mahalia Jackson, Thurgood Marshall, and the Reverend Martin L. King of Montgomery Alabama. Numerous invitations urging the Tech choir to return next year were received from schools and churches.



The Tech choir is under the direction of George Van Hoy Collins, who is a graduate of Hampton Institute where he was a pupil of Dr. R. Nathaniel Dett, and a member and soloist of the internationally famous Hampton Choir. Mr. Collins also has studied at the Juilliard Music School, Wiley College, and with private voice teachers. He holds a Master's Degree in Music Education from Columbia University. Choirs under the direction of Mr. Collins have sung at the White House, Columbia University, Temple University, Atlantic City, high schools in Baltimore, Dillard University, high schools in Maryland and Washington, D.C., Bennett College, A. and T. College, Wiley College, Bishop College, Grambling College, and Xavier University. When Mr. Collins taught at Fayetteville State Teachers College, his choir was on the C.B.S. network five times. The Washington Technical High School Choir made many important appearances in Saint Louis during the four years Mr. Collins was director.

I will be, but I am told that on the 11th of November there will be a dinner in my honor at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, \$50.00 a plate and of course I plan to be there.

There is a committee of one hundred working on the Handy Week and occasionally I am called over the phone and told some of the big things they are doing and if I were physically able I would of course be in the city from time to time and would like to tell you. I know

Information above obtained from Collins during interview. Mentioned concert was given in 1956.

Handy Week celebration is an effort to raise \$25,000 for the



## APPENDIX XXVII

W. C. HANDY

Below is an answer from W. C. Handy in response to an invitation to come to Saint Louis for a proposed jazz festival:

## RESIDENCE

19 Chester Drive  
Colonial Heights  
Tuckahoe 7, New York

WILLIAM C. HANDY, MUS. D.  
1650 Broadway  
New York 19, New York

September 11, 1957

Mr. John C. Cotter  
5429 Vernon  
Saint Luis 12, Missouri

Dear Mr. Cotter:

I acknowledge with thanks receipt of your letter dated September 3rd, and I am undertaking to answer it, although I don't know at this time what I will be doing or where I will be, but I am told that on the 17th of November there will be a dinner in my honor at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, \$50.00 a plate and of course I plan to be there.

There is a committee of one hundred working on the Handy Week and occasionally I am called over the phone and told some of the big things they are doing and if I were physically able I would of course be in the city from time to time and know more to tell you. I know Handy Week is scheduled from November 12th through the 17th, and that the Mayor will issue a Proclamation which has been read to me over the phone. For that week I am told that Times Square will be Handy Square. The Handy Week celebration is an effort to raise \$85,000 for the



W. C. Handy Foundation for the Blind, Inc., in connection with James H. Hubert, President. You know Mr. Hubert, of course, through the Urban League and I think it was their plan to interest cities such as Saint Louis, Memphis, Chicago and Los Angeles and others in this Handy Week.

The thought I am trying to get over to you is that, if the New York dinner were held here on the 16th, it would be too taxing on me to be in Saint Louis on the 17th.

Last night my Doctor was here and in addition to his usual work I was vaccinated against Asian Flu and although I am planning to go to Los Angeles around the 7th, of October I will have to have his permission.

I regret that this letter doesn't lend you very much encouragement, but what more can a sick man promise, in truth, it was my running here and there without proper rest that brought on this condition.

Mrs. Handy joins me in wishing you life's blessings to the fullest.

Yours very truly,

William C. Handy



## APPENDIX XXVIII

W. C. Handy

## "LOW DOWN BIRTH OF 'SAINT LOUIS BLUES'

W. C. Handy, at 81 and on a sick bed where his light coffee face smiles up from a sky blue pillowcase, has no fear to see that evening sun go down.

He knows that for him it will never go down. His works will go shining on wherever folks sing songs, or hear them, as another poet once said, 'In the deep hearts core.'

His father was a preacher and his grandfather was a preacher, but William Christopher Handy got side tracked from studying for the clergy when one day, as he says, 'Somehow I got hold of an old cornet.'

His school teacher told him music would take him to the gutter. One day, in Saint Louis, he did reach the gutter - the year was 1893 and he was so down and out he had to sleep on the cobblestones of the levee. But he figures it was there he got something of the spirit of the people.

This is Handy's eighty-second year, and it is the forty-first of his most famous creation, 'The Saint Louis Blues'. There seems little doubt that the creation is immortal, its fame is world-wide. A radio station recently decided to play a whole hour of recordings of that one song. They wrote Handy and found they had eight hundred different arrangements to pick from.

Handy is given credit by the encyclopedias with bringing the blues to the public, starting with 'Memphis Blues' in 1909. Recently he got word that his native town, Florence, Alabama plans to place a marker at his birthplace.

'You just go ahead and do your work and live your life,' he said, 'and if somebody wants to give you a reward, that is all right.'



Sixty-two years ago when Handy arrived in Saint Louis, he said, 'I had been beat out of my money. I was a tramp and lousy. I threw my shirt and part of my clothing off the Eads Bridge, and that night I slept in a horse's stall at the race track. I went to live on the levee and slept on the cobblestones. If I could get ahold of an occasional nickel or dime, I would get a loaf of bread and a wooden dish with butter and molasses to dip the bread in. I'd split the loaf three ways - pieces for breakfast, noon and night.'

'But from the man far down, suffering as he suffered, I got a purer poetry than you could write. It was right out of the heart they talked.'

'In Saint Louis I heard a woman say, 'A man's got a heart like a rock cast in the sea.' Handy swung the words out in rhythm.

'I asked another woman, 'What's she mean about the heart?' The other woman said, 'Law, honey, she means it's hard. It's gone far from her and she'll never reach it.'

'I maybe heard a plantation Negro say, 'I hate to see that evening sun go down'. and I heard the songs on the boats at the levee. Those things and pictures stayed in my mind, and twenty-one years later, in 1914, they all went into one piece of music in one night.'

Handy said he wrote 'Saint Louis Blues' in a rooming house in Second Street in Memphis. The next day he orchestrated it on a cigar counter in Pee-Wee's Saloon on Beale Street."

This article written by H. D. Quizz of the Staff of United Press and appeared in the April 18, 1955 edition of the Saint Louis Post-Dispatch.



## APPENDIX XXIX

## WENDELL MARSHALL

## "MARSHALL, BASS ON OWN AFTER SIX YEARS WITH DUKE

New York - Duke Ellington's regular bassist since 1948 has been Wendell Marshall, whose early fame was based more on the fact that he was the legendary Jimmy Blanton's first cousin than on his own considerable musical ability. But gradually, listeners, and especially musicians have begun to realize through the years that the quietly conscientious Marshall has become one of the most dependable creative bassists in contemporary jazz.

Marshall's work on Ellington records and during Duke's personal appearance stands has been a model of steadily pulsating swing, good tone and the kind of musicianly imagination that is far better heard than described.

Now Wendell is on his own. After Duke finished a long Basin Street engagement on January the 2nd Wendell left the band. His plans are still tentative, but he already has made arrangements to resume his formal studies on bass - a desire he has long been prevented from fulfilling because of the time-disintegrating difficulties of years of one-night stands. Eventually, Wendell intends to form his own combo. Characteristically, he is already planning ahead in terms of the instrumentation and style he wants. He'd like a clarinet doubling on tenor and a flutist doubling on alto, as well as piano and bass.

For Marshall, the present moment, however, is one for consolidation and further thought concerning a future based on what are by now many years of jazz experience. Marshall is thirty-four, having been born in Saint Louis of a musical family. When he was still a child, he was attracted to the piano and played by ear though he never had any lessons. He also had about a month of



violin instruction when he was eight. But the major influence on his musical life didn't take place until Marshall was sixteen.

Marshall's first cousin, Jimmy Blanton, who was only two years older, came to town that year. As Marshall explains it, 'I had an interest in music before Jimmy came, but he was the one who channeled it into the bass. It was the feeling he seemed to get out of it, it sort of caught fire with me . . .

'It was Jimmy, you know,' emphasized Marshall, 'who really revolutionized jazz bass. His rhythmic line was more melodic than most bassists had generally thought of playing, and his solos had the mark of his tremendous individuality. He used the bass like a horn for his solos, and he made the bass come to the front as any other solo instrument would. He could do that because he had an extensive musical background. Jimmy played other instruments as well as bass, and he arranged. And the Uncle who had originally taught him in Chattanooga played all instruments.'

'Jimmy had been playing the small violin since he was about ten and at about the same age, he also began arranging for piano and violin. Another fact that isn't well known about Jimmy is that he played nice alto. He really liked that instrument, probably played it just for kicks. I heard him blow alto once. His intervals were very different from any I'd heard at the time. They were wider and weren't the usual 1-3-5 or 6 patterns that were common then. I didn't know what they were at that time, but now I realize they were more along the lines the men are playing today. Jimmy also played piano - he played things harmonically. I seldom hear men play that way even now. He was way out there musically, period.'

'Jimmy was very quiet and he was a perfectionist. He loved music intensely and he was studying and thinking about it constantly. I remember that at that time, he particularly liked Lunceford and wanted to play with him.. Jimmy left Saint Louis in 1939 to go with Duke Ellington, and he died of TB Three years later when he was twenty-four.'

'Those people who heard Jimmy only records never



really got to hear what he could do, as good as the records were. You had to catch him at a session. It was something almost unbelievable! When he had a chance to play at a session for an hour running, he really turned loose. It was when he was jamming like that at a Saint Louis club that Johnny Hodges heard him. Billy Strayhorn came around too and they sent someone to get Duke. The story goes that Duke didn't want to come at first and finally arrived in his pajamas with his coat over them. After Duke heard him, he started featuring Jimmy with the band the next night.'

'When Jimmy left Saint Louis, he left a bass behind - a little half-sized fiddle. It laid around for about a half a year, and the more Jimmy played with Duke, the more my interest in that bass grew. I picked it up finally and for six months practiced with the radio and with records, and then I played some non-union gigs at school. I joined the union in December of 1941 and I got with Lionel Hampton about that time. My being hired by Hampton was more or less a publicity stunt, I guess, because I was Jimmy's cousin - I'd only been playing about seven months. I stayed with Hampton for three or four months and went back to school at the Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri.

'I was majoring in industrial arts at Lincoln and I was inducted into the army in 1943 as soon as I graduated. My army service lasted three years and a month. After I got out I went out with Stuff Smith for a few months, and in 1947 I formed a trio that did well around Saint Louis for a time.'

'Then I went to New York and a school friend introduced me to Mercer Ellington, who had a band then and needed a bass player. After four months, we had a week or two off, and Mercer asked me if I wanted a job for that period. I was surprised when he told me it was with his father. I joined Duke in September, 1948 and that is where I've been until now. Working with Duke and the wonderful musicians in the band has given me a wealth of experience too few musicians have an opportunity to get.'



'Being referred to as Jimmy Blanton's cousin all these years has never bothered me, of course, but I think it did give me a complex that people expected so very much of me because of what he could do. I'm maybe getting around to myself now.' "

The preceding article appeared in the March 23rd, 1955 edition of DOWNBEAT MAGAZINE.



## APPENDIX XXX

## CLARK TERRY

## "MUSICIANS MUSICIAN"

## TERRY PUTS HEART IN ELLINGTON BAND

Clark Terry, the trumpet player, was talking about the Duke Ellington band, now playing in a Loop jazz emporium. He said:

'I think the band is swinging greater now than it ever did before.'

Terry has been playing with the Duke for five years, and in that time the band has experienced bad times. Terry paid tribute:

'I think the turning point came when Sam Woodyard took over on drums and Johnny Hodges returned to his alto saxophone chair about a year ago. Sam gave the band that swinging beat. He's in the class with Buddy Rich, Louis Bellison and Max Roach. With Johnny back, the reed section has that full rich sound.'

He added:

'For some reason, Duke has been re-inspired. He's been on a grapefruit and steak diet. Lost twenty-seven or twenty-eight pounds. Got that waistline down. Sweet Pea (arranger) Strayhorn is writing some good arrangements, too. And several of the guys are writing. That is encouraging. It gives us a chance to get some of our material exploited. The Anchor (baritone saxophonist Harry Carney) soon will celebrate his 30th year with the band.'

Terry talked about clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton. He was generous in his praise, but he never said a word about himself.



That is typical of Clark Terry.

He is not nearly as famous as Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong, or Dizzy Gillespie. Yet many jazz experts testify that heart of the Ellington Band is Terry. He is unheralded, but truly great. He is 'a musicians' musician'.

A native of Saint Louis, Terry has been with the Duke five years. He played four and a half years with Count Basie, and a year with Charlie Barnet. He has also been with Charlie Ventura, Eddie Vinson and a group under the leadership of George Hudson. He remembers Hudson's band fondly:

'That was the most-together band I've ever been with. We were just like a family. We rehearsed night and day. We rehearsed everything.'

About the Duke he says:

'The old man is really great. He has tremendous talent, unbounded talent. To tell the truth, he's amazing!'

A resident of New York, married and a father of two sons, Terry admits that his ambition is to settle down, that constant travel on chartered buses is rough, but says:

'The way the band is playing, it makes you want to stay on.'

On the Ellington band schedule, a musician doesn't stay in one place long. The band plays Chicago this trip for two weeks. Last summer the musicians were lucky. They played New York all season. Later they played Las Vegas for a six week stretch. Terry finds compensations for touring:

'Things are better on the road for a big band (Duke has fifteen pieces) than they were two or three years ago. We



used to wonder when are people coming back to dance? But now they are there. They come both to dance and to listen.'

Terry gained his present stature the hard way. His brother-in-law taught him to play bass fiddle. One of his brothers played drums and another fooled around with the guitar and the tuba. At seventeen Terry joined a drum and bugle corps but didn't like the tempo. In a school band, he tried the valve trombone, but was still unhappy. He hit his groove after he bought a trumpet from a pawn shop. As soon as he had the feeling of his instrument, he knew he was at home."

The preceding article was written by A.S. (Doc) Young and appeared in the August 27th, 1956 edition of the Chicago American. Chicago, Illinois daily newspaper.



## APPENDIX XXXI

THE SAINT LOUIS NEGRO AFFILIATES WITH THE  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS

Prior to 1896, many of the Negro musicians of Saint Louis were members of an organization known as the Musicians Mutual Protective Association which was affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.

In 1896, communications were sent to professional musical units in various sections of the country to attend a convention sponsored by the American Federation of Labor to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana. The expressed purpose of this convention was to organize the musicians of the United States. John L. Fields was sent from the Negro musicians group of Saint Louis to attend this convention. He was the only Negro delegate in attendance among the forty-four delegates. As a result of the actions of this convention, the American Federation of Musicians was organized. The Negro musicians of Saint Louis were given charter for Local No. 44, the first of the Negro locals to become affiliated with the Federation.

The first president of Local No. 44 was L. K. Baker. Among the charter members were Eugene McDonald, Charles Scott, who also was a member of the Board of

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1. According to information received from Eddie McKinney and Elijah W. Shaw.



Directors which helped write the constitution and by-laws of the Central Trades and Labor Union, W.D. 'Bill' Flowers, P. B. Langford and J. W. 'Pops' Adams.

Other past presidents of Local No. 44 include John L. Fields, Charles A. Scott, A. A. Simms and James H. Harris.

Eddie McKinney currently an honorary member of Local No. 197, the present Saint Louis Negro affiliate with the American Federation of Musicians was secretary of Local No. 44 from 1922 until 1932.

The first headquarters of Local No. 44 was located at 3438 Lawton Avenue.

As is the procedure now, most of the leading professional musicians were affiliated with locals in the American Federation of Musicians. In Saint Louis during the ragtime era, the most prominent of the pianists were members of Local No. 44.

From 1917 to the days of the late 20's, Local No. 44 had as its members such jazz leaders as Sidney Costello, Willie Grant, Charles Creath, Fate Marable, Dewey Jackson, Johnnie White, Mose Wiley, Harvey Langford, Cecil White, Oliver Cobb, Floyd Campbell, Jimmie Powell Cecil Scott, and P. B. Dickerson, all pioneers of the jazz movement in Saint Louis. In the brass band field such leaders as P. B. Langford, A. A. Simms, P. L. McElroy

According to information received from Percy Smith, who performed in the localities.



and William Blue were members of Local No. 44.<sup>2</sup>

Members of Local No. 44 played at such places as the Arcadia Ballroom, on the Streckfus excursions steamers, Castle Ballroom, Sauters Park, Jefferson Hotel, Chase Hotel, Chauffeurs Club, Jazz Land, the Booker Washington Theatre and the Pythian Hall.

In the early days of radio, members of Local No. 44 had steady employment on the three major stations in Saint Louis: Bennie Washington and orchestra played over Station WIL; Harvey Langford was heard over STation KMOX; and Cecil Scott broadcasted over Station KSD. His band was called 'Cecil Scott and His Salt and Pepper Shakers.' Later Dewey Jackson and his Musical Ambassadors were heard over Station KMOX. Eddie Randle and his Seven Blue Devils broadcasted over Station WEW during the years 1933 to 1938.<sup>3</sup>

In almost every one of the Negro movie houses, there was some live music ranging from a piano player to an orchestra of seven or eight musicians performing for the silent movies. Among the theatres that hired musicians from Local No. 44 were the Jest a Mere, Venus, Criterion and the Olympic. Music was rented from Hunleth's Music Store with the score from the movie to be presented.<sup>4</sup>

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2. When Simms organized the Post Office Band in 1906 he brought all members in the band in Local No. 44 with him.

3. It may be noted that during the earlier days most of the orchestras had a long title such as 'The Musical Ambassadors'.

4. According to information received from Percy Bibb, who performed in the theatres.



Besides ones previously mentioned, among other musicians performing at the theatres were James H. Harris II, Will Vassar, Theodosia Hall, one of the first women to become affiliated with Local No. 44, Mildred Franklin, James Campbell, Eddie Hudson and Edward White.

In the dance field up until the early 30's Local No. 44 practically controlled the employment in Saint Louis.<sup>5</sup> It has been said that Charles Creath, one of the more prominent orchestra leaders during this time, often had as many as six different groups working on the same night, using nearly every available member who could play well enough to make a job.

Because of the advent of talking pictures, when musicians lost employment in the theatres, white and Negro, and difficulties which developed between the two Saint Louis locals, tremendous pressure was put on members of Local No. 44.<sup>6</sup> Their jobs were patrolled by officials from Local No. 2, and often operators of white establishments were encouraged, sometimes unethically, to hire white musicians instead of Negro musicians.

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5. According to information received from Eddie McKinnie, Elijah Shaw, Dewey Jackson and Percy Bibb.

6. Ibid

7. Former members of Local No. 44 report that Local No. 2 accused members of Local No. 44 of working under the scale price and other irregularities in their effort to obtain employment before dominated by members of Local No. 44. Few of these accusations were proven, according to these members. This eventually led to the dissolution of Local No. 44.



In 1932, because of reported irregularities existing on jobs played by members of Local No. 44, and laxities suspected among the officers, the charter of Local No. 44 was revoked.<sup>8</sup> These irregularities were reported to the national office of the American Federation of Musicians by Local No. 2, the white affiliate with the Federation in Saint Louis.

In conversation with many of the former members of Local No. 44, it was stated that Local No. 2 began these reports in an effort to have the charter taken away from Local No. 44. As these negotiations were being carried on between Local No. 2 and the national office, the officers of Local No. 44 were not notified of such, and no explanation nor opportunity for defense of charges were afforded Local No. 44. The only communication received was the one which stated that the charter of Local No. 44 had been revoked. The reasons for the revocation of the charter were never revealed to members of Local No. 44, as the accusations were never proven to be factual.<sup>9</sup>

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8. It was reported that the officers were not reprimanding their members for working under the scale price, and also reported that one of the officials was on a job which was under the scale price.

9. According to McKinney, who was secretary at that time, as yet it is unknown exactly why the charter was revoked. They wrote the office of the President of the Federation but only received communications that because of the report of irregularities reported, the charter of Local No. 44 was revoked.



As the charter had been revoked, the Negro musicians of Saint Louis were sent a copy of the plans for the existence of a subsidiary local which would be under the jurisdiction of Local No. 2. Most of the members were against such a set up.

Fate Marable, one of the leading band leaders, wrote a letter to the Federation stating he had names of the required fifteen musicians willing to comply to the regulations of a subsidiary local in Saint Louis. Marable, leader of the band on the excursion steamer Saint Paul at that time, needed to retain union status to remain on his job. It was reported that members of Local No. 2 were negotiating for this job, as they were for other steady engagements which members of Local No. 44 had, stating the Negro members were not affiliated with the American Federation of Musicians. Dewey Jackson also needed union status to remain on his job, and members of his band were willing to accept the conditions of the subsidiary local.

The idea of a subsidiary local caused quite a controversy both among the Negro musicians and the general public, for it seemed certain that as a subsidiary local in Saint Louis, the Negro musicians would lose their independent status and would be under the jurisdiction of Local No. 2. Meetings were held when

a professional musician, I soon became acquainted with the disadvantages of such a set up.



discussions of unfair treatment by the Federation in the revoking of charter of Local No. 44 was the general subject. Many of the musicians were willing to work outside the union rather than become a part of the subsidiary local. Organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.) intervened and urged the Negro musicians not to accept subsidiary status.

Nevertheless, in the middle of 1932, the subsidiary local was set up. Dewey Jackson was elected as the first president of Subsidiary Local No. 2. Later Elijah W. Shaw became president. On December 6, 1932 the last meeting with members of Local No. 44 was held and the local was officially dissolved.

From 1932 until 1944, Subsidiary Local No. 2 existed and there arose many unpleasant relationships between the subsidiary local and Local No. 2. Fines in amounts to \$1,000.00 were imposed on members of the subsidiary local for violations, as the Negro members were tried by the Board of Directors of Local No. 2 for violations concerning jobs with white patronage. Such practices were considered unfair and caused more friction between the two locals.

I became associated with Subsidiary Local No. 2 as a member during this period, as I began my career as a professional musician. I soon became acquainted with the disadvantages of such a set up.



Although made unhappy by the existence of the subsidiary local, the Negro musicians of Saint Louis continued their progress under the leadership of Elijah W. Shaw, who had proven his worth to the organization as a labor leader. The local maintained its own headquarters, treasury and established itself as an organization capable of taking care of its obligations as a part of the American Federation of Musicians.

With Shaw as its militant leader, and George Hudson as succeeding president, the fight continued to regain independent status in the Federation. For many years, Subsidiary Local No. 2 sent members to the conventions of the American Federation of Musicians at the expense of the local. The prime purpose was to attempt to incite the delegates at the convention as to the unjustness of subsidiary locals. Shaw was usually one of the delegates, and by his efforts became well known among the officers of the Federation and the many delegates, although he was not an official delegate.

When James C. Petrillo became president of the American Federation of Musicians in 1940, the days of subsidiary locals were numbered, for one of his first major moves was the abolishment of all subsidiary locals. The efforts of Shaw and other representatives of Negro locals did much to influence this decision by Petrillo.



Subsequently charter was granted the Negro musicians of Saint Louis on October 22, 1944. The local was chartered No. 197, and the Saint Louis Negro Musicians were again granted independent status in the American Federation of Musicians.

Elijah W. Shaw became the first president of Local No. 197, and the members gave him due credit for his service to the organization. Other officers of the newly chartered Local No. 197 were Robert Parker, secretary and Winston Walker, business representative. I was appointed secretary in the fall of 1944, and at the election of officers in December, 1944, I was elected secretary for the year 1945, a position from which I resigned in the spring of 1945 because the musical group I was playing with then, the Jeter-Pillars Orchestra, spent most of 1945 out of town.

Local No. 197, benefiting from the experience and foresight of such pioneer musicians and labor leaders as Elijah W. Shaw, Dewey Jackson, Winston Walker, William Rollins and Eddie Randle, began its progress as an independent local in the Federation. The difficulties of existence under Local No. 2 as a subsidiary local provided added incentive for success.

The membership of Local No. 197 began to grow and some of the older musicians, former members of Local No.



44 who refused to accept the conditions of a subsidiary local, became members of Local No. 197. Among these were Eddie McKinney, James H. Harris and Percy Bibb.

The increased membership necessitated larger quarters and in 1946 Local 197 moved from its two room and basement location which had a first floor office, meeting room and recreation room combined, located at 3912 Finney Avenue, to its present location at 4414 Delmar Boulevard. The new building, for which the local paid \$11,000.00 cash, provided necessary facilities with its three floors and basement.

As a reward for his service to the Negro musicians unions in Saint Louis, Eddie McKinney was awarded an honorary membership in Local No. 197 on January 2, 1945.<sup>10</sup>

Elijah W. Shaw has the distinction of being the only life member of Local No. 197. This honor was bestowed on him on December 12, 1954.

Shaw served as president of Local No. 197 from 1944 until 1946 when he was succeeded by Robert Carter, a former member of the Board of Directors. I again was elected secretary in 1947 for the 1948 term. I remained in this capacity until 1952 when I declined

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affairs which wanted live music. Much of this employment we did not have previously. Through the efforts of Smith,



the nomination for secretary as I had entered Washington University. I was succeeded in office by James K. Houston. In the year 1954 I was elected again as secretary for the year 1955, a position I still hold.

George L. Smith, current president of Local No. 197 succeeded Robert Carter in 1951 and continued the work of Shaw and Carter as Local No. 197 continued its progress as a labor union.

Smith, educated in the Saint Louis Public School System, has been a dominant figure in the continued success of Local No. 197.

In official capacities, with Local No. 197 Smith has been business representative, member of the board of directors, and president's assistant. From this experience he was quite capable of taking over the leadership of the organization. He has been cited by such organizations as the N.A.A.C.P. and the Mount City Press Club for his community activities. He was a member of various committees appointed by the late Mayor Darst, and other local dignitaries. His efforts have resulted in employment for members of Local No. 197 at ball games of the professional baseball clubs in Saint Louis, political rallies, and for many other city wide affairs which wanted live music. Much of this employment we did not have previously. Through the efforts of Smith,



Local No. 197 has presented concerts in many of the city parks, churches, playgrounds and in other public places in the area.

As Smith has often said, his job has been aided by having former presidents as Shaw, Hudson, Harris and Carter either as members of the board of directors or as president's assistants.

Under the leadership of George L. Smith, Local No. 197 has attained the stature of one of the leading Negro locals in the Federation, both in number of members and accomplishments as a labor organization. His efforts have been rewarded by the Federation as he has been a member of the location committee at the conventions of the American Federation of Musicians for the past five years.

The present membership of Local No. 197 has passed the three hundred and fifty mark, and among its members are doctors, lawyers, school teachers, music consultants in the public school systems, workers in almost every vocation, besides musicians performing with many of the most prominent of America's jazz leaders. Most of the musicians mentioned in Chapter V maintain their membership in Local No. 197.

As business representatives Local No. 197 has Benjamin Thigpen, another of the jazz pioneers, and Hughey Webb. Thigpen, before settling in East Saint Louis, Illinois



traveled for a long period with the Andy Kirk orchestra and was considered as one of the leading drummers in the dance band field. He has done a stalwart job as representative in the Illinois jurisdiction. Hughey Webb, also an experienced musician who has traveled extensively, is in charge of the Saint Louis territory.

The present executive body of Local No. 197 is:

George L. Smith	President and Treasurer
Robert Carter	Vice President
John C. Cotter	Secretary
Hughey Webb	Assistant Secretary
Benjamin Thigpen	Business Representative
Hughey Webb	Business Representative

The Board of Directors are:

Elijah W. Shaw  
Walter Lathen  
Alice Jones  
William Rollins

Mr. John  
5423 York  
Saint Louis 11, Missouri

Dear Mr. Cotter:

Mr. Willis M. Walton, who joined our organization this autumn as a member of the band, has, unfortunately, been to a profession of his musical status, he has been compelled to leave us after a few weeks of playing to fulfill his obligations to the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra where he is the principal double bass. We hope, however, that he will be able to return here after the completion of this engagement.

Cordially,

Thomas G. Perry, Jr.

The next paragraphs are from a letter received from Walton concerning his musical activities.



## APPENDIX XXXII

ORTIZ M. WALTON

Below is a reprint of a letter received from the manager of the Boston Symphony Orchestra concerning Ortiz M. Walton.

" BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Charles Munch, Music Director  
Thomas D. Perry, Jr., Manager  
Symphony Hall,  
Boston 15, Massachusetts

November 15, 1957

Mr. John C. Cotter  
5429 Vernon Street  
Saint Louis 12, Missouri

Dear Mr. Cotter:

Mr. Ortiz M. Walton, who joined the orchestra this autumn as a member of the bass section, is a Negro. Unfortunately, owing to a confusion of his contractual status, he has been compelled to leave us after a few weeks of playing to fulfill his obligation to the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra where he is the principal double bass. We hope, however, that he will be able to return here after the completion of this obligation.

Cordially,

Thomas D. Perry, Jr. "

The next paragraphs are from a letter received from Walton concerning his musical activities.



"The salient points of my educational and musical background are as follows: Having graduated from Proviso Township High School in Maywood, Illinois, in February 1950, I attended a semester at Roosevelt University. Then followed a summer at Tanglewood, where I became acquainted with a bass instructor at Hart College - Willis Page. It was with Page that I studied for three years in Hartford, Connecticut.

My first professional experience came during the interim when I played with the Hartford, Springfield and New Haven Symphonies.

The following year I became a student of Philip Sklar (now deceased) at New York's Mannes School of Music.

During this period I played in National Orchestral Association under Leon Barzin and derived much from beneficial professional coaching.

Joseph Krips auditioned and hired me for the 1955 season of the Buffalo Philharmonic. This will be my third season with Buffalo, since my appointment to the Boston Symphony terminated after having to fulfill prior commitments in Buffalo."

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Baker, Harold  
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Bakerville, Bessie  
Banks, Nellie  
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